STRIVING TOGETHER
ASEAN & THE UN
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MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The United Nations and ASEAN have long shared the goal of building a more stable and prosperous world. Our organizations have worked together on many important economic and social development programmes across South-East Asia, including efforts to control disease, improve disaster preparedness and response, and deepen regional integration. In May 2008, by joining forces to respond quickly and effectively to the devastation left by Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar, we demonstrated how successfully we can work together at a time of crisis to save lives in a complex and difficult environment.

Striving Together: ASEAN & the UN details the many ways in which the United Nations and ASEAN are trying to strengthen their partnership, a process in which the United Nations Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism has an important role to play. The United Nations is strongly committed to building on our achievements and exploring new areas of cooperation. In that spirit, I commend this study to a wide readership.

Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations
On 15 December 2008, the entry into force of the ASEAN Charter was welcomed in a ceremony held at the ASEAN Secretariat. With this Charter, ASEAN is not only able to operate more effectively as a regional organization, but also to engage more closely with the rest of the world. The vision of an ASEAN Community has received fresh impetus from the Charter, and we are accelerating the process of regional integration by developing the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity, supported by ESCAP, the ADB and the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA).

The United Nations is among our most important partners in international cooperation. The first two ASEAN-United Nations Summits have helped us to forge a strong relationship with the UN, and we look forward to exploring further ways of working together even more productively, building on the principles of the ASEAN Charter.

I appreciate the support of the United Nations for the ASEAN region and welcome its spirit of cooperation, which is reflected by this study. The forthcoming third ASEAN-United Nations Summit should usher in a new phase of strengthened partnership for us with the United Nations family through the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism to take concerted action on continued ASEAN advancement.

Surin Pitsuwan
Secretary-General of ASEAN
FOREWORD

Over the past four decades, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations has helped preserve peace across the region, and created opportunities for economic and social cooperation. Now ASEAN is at the threshold of a new era, facing a global environment fraught with new uncertainties and the challenge of finding its feet in a shifting global political and economic order.

ASEAN member States have risen to the challenge by ratifying the ASEAN Charter and launching under it a fresh wave of initiatives to deepen their security, economic and socio-cultural cooperation for their eventual integration into an ‘ASEAN Community’. This will make for a more cohesive, rules-based organization that is able to build new bridges with the rest of Asia and the Pacific and the world at large, and capable of a stronger collective voice on international developments that concern the prosperity and well-being of its people.

I am especially heartened that ASEAN has embraced a new Charter. Just as the United Nations has ground its mission on the ideals of its Charter, so ASEAN is now on the path to strengthening itself around an agreed set of principles and understandings. The Charter is the bedrock upon which the three pillars of the ASEAN Community will be built.

Building these pillars implies narrowing the development gaps among ASEAN member States. Given their economic, social and cultural diversity — especially between the poorer and affluent member States — this is no mean task. To its credit, ASEAN has made steady progress on several fronts and it has a number of important achievements to be proud of. At the same time, many development gaps remain and there are new imperatives for ASEAN to address them sooner rather than later.

This study is a contribution from the United Nations to help ASEAN’s transformation into a more cohesive whole. It is not so much about the individual achievements of ASEAN member States, laudable as they are. Rather, it is about their achievements as a grouping, with shared goals and a shared destiny. The study was carried out with the support of the United Nations family under the Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism, which aims to strengthen policy coherence and coordination among United Nations entities at the regional level. It takes stock of ASEAN’s achievements and highlights the remaining gaps in the context of ASEAN’s decades-long partnership with the United Nations — a partnership to which the United Nations reaffirms its commitment as ASEAN enters a new phase of its development.

Noeleen Heyzer
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations
Executive Secretary, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Chairperson, Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study is an update of the original edition, which was published in 2008. While it retains the structure and much of the contents of the 2008 edition, it features many new contributions, including statistical information, from members of the United Nations Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) and ESCAP staff. Both editions were prepared under the guidance of Noeleen Heyzer, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP.


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<td>Reduce, Reuse and Recycle</td>
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<td>AADMER</td>
<td>ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Response</td>
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<td>ABMI</td>
<td>ASEAN+3 Bond Markets Initiative</td>
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<td>ACCORD</td>
<td>ASEAN and China Cooperative Operations in Response to Dangerous Drugs</td>
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<td>ACD</td>
<td>Asia Cooperation Dialogue</td>
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<td>ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management</td>
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<td>ACE</td>
<td>ASEAN Centre for Energy</td>
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<td>ASEAN Community Progress Monitoring System</td>
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<td>ASEAN Civil Society Conference</td>
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<td>ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers</td>
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<td>ACW</td>
<td>ASEAN Committee on Women</td>
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<td>ACWC</td>
<td>ASEAN Commission for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Women and Children</td>
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<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<td>ASEAN Development Fund</td>
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<td>AFFA</td>
<td>ASEAN Federation of Freight Forwarders' Associations</td>
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<td>ASEAN Food Security Information System</td>
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<td>ASEAN Free Trade Area</td>
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<td>ASEAN Heads of Statistical Offices Meeting</td>
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<td>ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights</td>
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<td>AIDS</td>
<td>acquired immunodeficiency syndrome</td>
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<td>AIIP</td>
<td>Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact</td>
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<td>AMAF</td>
<td>ASEAN Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry</td>
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<td>AMM</td>
<td>ASEAN Ministerial Meetings</td>
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<td>AMRO</td>
<td>ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office</td>
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<td>APA</td>
<td>ASEAN People’s Assembly</td>
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<td>APASEC</td>
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<td>APCOM</td>
<td>Asia Pacific Coalition on Male Sexual Health</td>
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<td>APEC</td>
<td>Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation</td>
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<td>APF</td>
<td>Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions</td>
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<td>APRC</td>
<td>Asia-Pacific Regional Center</td>
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<td>APSA</td>
<td>ASEAN Petroleum Security Agreement</td>
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<td>APWINC</td>
<td>Asia Pacific Women’s Information Network Center</td>
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<td>APWS</td>
<td>Asia-Pacific Water Summit</td>
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<td>ARF</td>
<td>ASEAN regional disaster management exercises</td>
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<td>ASE</td>
<td>ASEAN Regional Forum</td>
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<td>ASAC</td>
<td>ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community</td>
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<td>ASCCARS</td>
<td>ASEAN Subcommittee on Civil Aviation and Related Services</td>
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<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association of Southeast Asian Nations</td>
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<td>ASEAN+1</td>
<td>ASEAN + a Dialogue Partner country</td>
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<td>ASEAN+3</td>
<td>ASEAN + China, Japan and the Republic of Korea</td>
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<td>ASEAN-6</td>
<td>Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand</td>
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<td>ASEAN-10</td>
<td>Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam</td>
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<td>ASEAN-BAC</td>
<td>ASEAN Business Advisory Council</td>
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<td>ASEAN BIS</td>
<td>ASEAN Business and Investment Summit</td>
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<td>ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry</td>
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<td>ASEAN-OSHNET</td>
<td>ASEAN Occupational Safety and Health Network</td>
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<td>ASEAN-SOM</td>
<td>ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting</td>
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<td>Asia-Europe Meeting</td>
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<td>ATFOA</td>
<td>ASEAN Task Force on AIDS</td>
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<td>ATIGA</td>
<td>ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement</td>
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<td>ATRC</td>
<td>ASEAN Telecommunications Regulators Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>BAT/BEP</td>
<td>Best Available Technology/Best Environmental Practice</td>
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<td>BSA</td>
<td>bilateral swap arrangements</td>
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<td>CAPSCA</td>
<td>Cooperative Arrangement for Prevention of Spread of Communicable disease through Air travel</td>
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<tr>
<td>CASP-AP</td>
<td>Cooperative Aviation Security Programme for Asia and Pacific</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCCI</td>
<td>Cities in Climate Change Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEB</td>
<td>(United Nations System) Chief Executives Board for Coordination</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEPEA</td>
<td>Comprehensive Economic Partnership of East Asia</td>
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CEPT Common effective preferential tariff
CERM Co-ordinated Emergency Response Measures
CFA Comprehensive Framework for Action
CLMV Cambodia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Viet Nam
CMI Chiang Mai Initiative
CMIM Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization
CNS/ATM communications, navigation, and surveillance and air traffic management
CO2 carbon dioxide
COMTRADE Commodity trade database of the United Nations Statistics Division
COSCAP-SEA Cooperative Development of Operational Safety and Continuing Airworthiness Programme
CSCAP Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific
CSO civil society organization
DALA damage and loss assessment
DCM developed country markets
DOTS Directly observed treatment, short course
DRM disaster risk management
DRR disaster reduction and recovery
EAERR East Asia Emergency Rice Reserve
ECLAC Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
EFA Education for All
EPG eminent persons group
ERAT Emergency Rapid Assessment Team
ESCAP Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
EST Environmentally Sustainable Transport
ETI enabling trade index
EU European Union
EU-15 Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (from 1995 to 2004).
FAO Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FASA Federation of ASEAN Ship owners’ Associations
FASC Federation of ASEAN Shippers’ Councils
FDI foreign direct investment
FTSE Financial Times Stock Exchange company
GATS General Agreement on Trade in Services
GFDRR Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (World Bank) and Recovery
GDP gross domestic product
GMS Greater Mekong Subregion
HIV human immunodeficiency virus
HPAI Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza
IAI Initiative for ASEAN Integration
IAP ISDR Asian Partnership on Disaster Reduction
ICAO International Civil Aviation Organization
ICD inland container depot
ICG/IOTWS Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System
ICT Information and communications technology
IEA International Energy Agency
IFCE ITU Framework for Cooperation in Emergencies
IFSC Integrated Framework Steering Committee
IFWG Integrated Framework Working Group
IHR International Health Regulations
ILO International Labour Organization
IOC-UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO
IOM International Organization for Migration
ISDR International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
ITU International Telecommunications Union
IWMI International Water Management Institute
LCDP low-carbon development path
LIBOR London Inter-Bank Offered Rate
LOA Letter of Agreement
LPI Logistics performance index
MAPDRR Myanmar Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction
MDG(s) Millennium Development Goal(s)
MEK-WATSAN Mekong Region Water and Sanitation Initiative
MERCOSUR South American Common Market
MISP Minimum Initial Service Package
MoC Memorandum of Cooperation
MoU Memorandum of understanding
MRA Mutual Recognition Agreement
MSM men who have sex with men
MTO Multimodal Transport Operator
<table>
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<td>NAFTA</td>
<td>North American Free Trade Agreement</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>non-governmental organization</td>
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<td>OCHA</td>
<td>Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>OHCHR</td>
<td>Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>OIE</td>
<td>World Organisation for Animal Health (formerly the International Office of Epizootics)</td>
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<td>OSH</td>
<td>Occupational Safety and Health</td>
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<td>PANS</td>
<td>Procedures for Air Navigation Services</td>
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<td>PCF</td>
<td>peer consultation framework</td>
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<td>PDNA</td>
<td>Post-disaster Damage, Loss and Needs Assessment</td>
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<td>PMTCT</td>
<td>Preventing Mother-to-Child Transmission</td>
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<td>FONJA</td>
<td>post-Nargis Joint Assessment</td>
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<td>POPs</td>
<td>Persistent Organic Pollutants</td>
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<td>PONREPP</td>
<td>Post Nargis Recovery and Preparedness Plan</td>
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<td>PPR</td>
<td>Pandemic Preparedness and Response</td>
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<td>PRSP</td>
<td>Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers</td>
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<td>RCM</td>
<td>Regional Coordination Mechanism</td>
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<td>RECP</td>
<td>Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production</td>
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<td>RIPP</td>
<td>Regional Programme on Indigenous Peoples’ Rights and Development</td>
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<td>ROB</td>
<td>Southeast Asia Regional Office of OHCHR</td>
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<td>SAARC</td>
<td>South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation</td>
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<td>SAFA</td>
<td>Solidarity for Asian People’s Advocacy network</td>
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<td>SARP</td>
<td>Standard and Recommended Practices</td>
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<td>SARS</td>
<td>Severe acute respiratory syndrome</td>
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<td>SEAMEO</td>
<td>Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization</td>
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<td>SEAWF</td>
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<td>SIAP</td>
<td>Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific</td>
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<td>SNA</td>
<td>System of National Accounts</td>
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<td>United Nations General Assembly Special Session</td>
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<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>UNICEF-ROSA</td>
<td>UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNIDO</td>
<td>United Nations Industrial Development Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNIFEM</td>
<td>United Nations Development Fund for Women (part of United Nations Women)</td>
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<td>UNODC</td>
<td>United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime</td>
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<td>VAP</td>
<td>Vientiane Programme of Action</td>
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<td>WAC</td>
<td>Water for Asian Cities</td>
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<td>WASH</td>
<td>Water, Sanitation and Hygiene</td>
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<td>WFP</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
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<td>WITS</td>
<td>World Integrated Trade Solution – World Bank software</td>
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<td>WMO</td>
<td>World Meteorological Organization</td>
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<td>WTO</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

South-East Asian nations lie at the crossroads of some of the most ancient civilizations in the world. Strategically located historically and in modern times; diverse in geophysical characteristics and natural resource endowments; rich in language, culture and tradition; and with distinct political, economic and social achievements, they are a unique fraternity of people and societies intermingling in an intriguing harmony that belies their differences.

ASEAN at a crossroads

Much of this harmony in the post-war era owes to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), one of the world’s more durable regional groupings, which has kept the peace among its members by concentrating on points of convergence while pursuing a policy of non-interference. Established with five countries in 1967, ASEAN has grown to ten member States and increasingly engaged as a group with other nations. After more than four decades of consolidating the ties among its members, it is now in the process of renewing itself as the “ASEAN Community”, with a new charter and a new mission seeking deeper integration among its members, and with the rest of Asia and the Pacific.

The impetus for change comes from within and without. The initial challenge to the ASEAN ‘model’ of governance — which traded full democratic accountability for sound economic performance — came from the 1997 Asian financial crisis which exposed many countries to new economic risks and uncertainties. The impacts of the crisis ruptured the claims of governments to be competent economic managers, the essence of their social bargain with their people. The crisis also called into question the continued wisdom of the policy of non-interference in one another’s affairs in an increasingly interconnected world.

The crisis and its aftermath prompted ASEAN to look beyond political solidarity and keeping the peace among its members to their economic and social integration. The new ASEAN Community is to consist of three ‘pillars’ — the ASEAN Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community — which are expected to be closely intertwined and mutually reinforcing to ensure durable peace, stability and shared prosperity in the region.

The global financial and economic crisis of 2008 has intensified the pressures for change. ASEAN countries are especially vulnerable to global turbulences due to their high reliance on external trade, foreign investment, and capital and technology flows. The new crisis has laid open this vulnerability through its widespread economic impacts and the ongoing realignment of the world political order it has triggered, with potentially far-reaching implications.

In response, ASEAN has launched a series of new initiatives to narrow the development gaps among its member countries to accelerate progress towards the ASEAN Community. This, ASEAN hopes, will make it a better-knit whole, resilient to the continuing fallouts from the 2008 crisis and other challenges that lie across the horizon.

Achievements so far

ASEAN has clearly made progress on several fronts to build the three pillars of its regional integration. The pace of this progress has varied between different areas, and not all areas and issues have necessarily been covered. Security and economic cooperation have received the most attention, with socio-cultural cooperation still at an early stage.

The Security Community

Since ASEAN’s founding, barring occasional border conflicts, no large-scale war has taken place among its member countries. The ASEAN Regional Forum, established in 1994, has become Asia’s principal arena for dialogue on peace and security. Besides ASEAN member States, it currently includes Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, China, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the European Union, India, Japan, Mongolia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Korea, the Russian
Federation, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste and the United States of America. ASEAN has also helped establish other regional forums with security agendas, such as the ASEAN+3 (ASEAN plus China, Japan and the Republic of Korea), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the Asia-Europe Meeting, and the Asia Cooperation Dialogue.

The Economic Community

The ASEAN Free Trade Agreements have set the path towards an ASEAN Free Trade Area. Falling tariffs have seen a steady increase in intra-ASEAN trade which, though small compared to ASEAN’s external trade, has been important for integration with the wider production systems in East Asia. Following the 1997 financial crisis, the Chiang Mai Initiative was established to reduce financial risks through cooperation in currency swaps, monitoring capital flows, regional surveillance and the training of personnel. In response to the 2008 global crisis, this was expanded to become the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization in March 2010, with an increased reserves pool and stricter criteria on surveillance, access to borrowing, activation processes and decision-making, and a regional macroeconomic surveillance unit. ASEAN has also taken important steps to strengthen infrastructure connectivity. Work on the ASEAN Highway Network Project and the Singapore-Kunming Rail Link project — to connect Cambodia, China, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam — has been accelerated. A number of agreements have been reached to facilitate transport and to reduce non-tariff barriers to trade. The ASEAN Power Grid and the Trans-ASEAN Gas Pipeline projects have completed four cross-border electricity interconnections and eight cross-border gas pipelines. In 2009, a revised ASEAN Petroleum Security Agreement was signed to coordinate emergency response measures and longer-term policies to strengthen energy security. There has been a rapid convergence among member countries in the diffusion of information and communications technology (ICT) with a narrowing of intercountry gaps in telephone subscriptions, personal computer ownership and access to the Internet.

The Socio-Cultural Community

Progress in socio-cultural integration remains a longer-term aspiration for ASEAN due to wide disparities among its member States. However, significant cooperation has been achieved in disaster management, prevention and control of communicable diseases, tackling transboundary environmental challenges, and raising public consciousness about the ASEAN identity. In the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, ASEAN members signed an Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response to establish, maintain and review national disaster early warning arrangements. In the wake of the Cyclone Nargis in 2008, ASEAN entered into an unprecedented partnership with the United Nations, including ESCAP, to assist the Government of Myanmar in relief, recovery and rebuilding. ASEAN worked with China to contain the spread of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003, and developed an action plan to prevent and control this and other infectious diseases through cooperation on international travel, public education and capacity-building. Following severe episodes of transboundary haze due to forest fires in Indonesia in 2006 and 2007, affected neighbouring countries came together to support Indonesia’s Plan of Action and offered capacity-building assistance to its fire-prone areas.

Remaining development gaps

In spite of these creditable achievements, an analysis of trends in convergence on key development outcomes between ASEAN member countries over the past two decades shows there are still significant to serious gaps in many areas of economic and social development. They indicate the ground ASEAN needs to cover to realize regional integration.

Income

Income disparities remain the most pronounced and, in turn, they are responsible for many other economic and social gaps among ASEAN countries. Singapore, with a per capita GDP of $24,516, and Viet Nam, with a per capita GDP of just $276 in 2008 define the range. Of particular concern is the refusal of the gap between the poorer and affluent countries to narrow since 1990.

Inflation

Inflation rates, a crucial determinant of savings and investments, varied between 5.4 to 6.5 per cent in Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand on the one hand, and on the other, over 20 per cent in Cambodia, Myanmar and Viet Nam in 2008. The rates have tended to converge and diverge over the years with no discernible pattern to them, suggesting fiscal policies remain influenced by national priorities.

Employment

Unemployment varied between 1.2 per cent in Thailand to 8.4 per cent in Indonesia in 2008, with the overall trend leaning towards further divergence. The proportion of work force in the informal sector
and in vulnerable employment ranged from 10 per cent in Singapore and 22 per cent in Malaysia to 74 per cent in Viet Nam and 87 per cent in Cambodia. The gaps show little sign of narrowing over time. Although disparities in labour productivity have narrowed since 1995, large gaps remain.

**Business and trade facilitation**

Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand were ranked high by the World Bank in 2010 in terms of business facilitation. Most other countries performed poorly, with Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, the Philippines and Viet Nam slipping down the rankings. Gaps in non-tariff barriers to trade also remain significant. In 2010, Singapore ranked the 1st on the World Economic Forum’s ‘enabling trade index’, followed by Malaysia (30th), Thailand (60th), Indonesia (68th), Viet Nam (71st), the Philippines (92nd) and Cambodia (102nd). The time taken to process imports and exports in ASEAN countries varied between 5 and 50 days, with Cambodia and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic presenting the greatest problems.

**Infrastructure**

Intercountry gaps have remained constant since 1990 for the proportion of paved roads, with 100 per cent of the roads in Singapore and 80 per cent in Malaysia paved by 2007 against only 15 per cent in the People’s Democratic Republic’s Democratic Republic and Myanmar. The gap in access to electricity varied between 100 per cent in Singapore and only 5 per cent in Myanmar in 2002. Even in the ICT sector, the high degree of convergence has more to do with the growth rates of services rather than absolute access, which shows continuing wide disparities between the poorer and affluent countries.

**Water and sanitation**

Access to safe drinking water has improved across ASEAN, from 72 per cent in 1990 to 86 per cent in 2008. However, half of the rural population in Cambodia and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and 20 per cent or more of the urban populations in the two countries and Myanmar still do not have access. Regional disparities are narrowing though.

**Environment**

CO₂ emissions per capita differ by over 60 times between the highest and lowest ASEAN countries due to the former’s heavy reliance on fossil fuels and the latter’s low rates of access to modern energy.

Energy use per $1,000 of GDP (energy intensity) has converged between 1991 and 2006 within a narrow range of 200-222 kgoe, suggesting energy efficiency levels are not improving appreciably.

**Social protection and inclusion**

Migrant workers in ASEAN face multiple vulnerabilities and gender discrimination at all stages of the migration process. Many have limited access to social protection, including access to sexual and reproductive health services. Women domestic workers are vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse. The employment prospects of skilled workers are undermined by the lack of professional standards and mutual recognition among countries. People with disabilities have low access to education and employment opportunities, with just 5 per cent of children with disabilities completing primary school in Indonesia and only 15 per cent of people with disabilities finding jobs with steady incomes in Viet Nam in 2005.

**Gender equality**

While gender equality has been achieved in access to primary education in all countries and progress made in secondary education, advances in education have not translated into economic opportunities. Women’s participation in employment is about half to two-thirds that of men across ASEAN. Women also earn less, about two-thirds of what men earn in the manufacturing sector in Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, often from the most tedious, repetitive jobs. In agriculture, they are discriminated against since land titles are usually held by males, which reduces their access to credit. In most countries, women occupy less than 20 per cent of parliamentary positions. In general, they are subjected to disturbing levels of sexual, physical and other forms of violence, and to harmful traditional and customary practices.

**Health**

While child mortality has come down from the early 1990s, the rates per 1,000 live births are still alarmingly high in Myanmar (98), Cambodia (90) and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (61), compared to Singapore (3), Malaysia (6) and Brunei Darussalam (7). The gaps in child mortality and nutrition are, in fact, widening. Although poorer countries fared better in maternal mortality by achieving steep reductions in deaths per 100,000 live births, the ratios are still high and convergence with other countries has been slow.
Vulnerability to communicable diseases

HIV infections levels in Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand were among the highest in Asia in 2007. While access to treatment has exceeded 95 per cent of the affected people in Cambodia and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, only 29 per cent in Myanmar, 34 per cent in Indonesia and 38 per cent in Malaysia had coverage. Tuberculosis prevalence and death rates are also high, especially in Myanmar and the Philippines, but disparities across the region have been narrowing.

ASEAN and the UN

Almost from its inception, ASEAN has worked with the United Nations. The first ASEAN-United Nations Summit in 2000 discussed peace and security, human resources development and South-South cooperation. The second Summit in 2005 focused on broader cooperation between the two organizations with the increased involvement of specialized United Nations agencies in key development issues, in particular poverty eradication and achievement of the MDGs, prevention and control of infectious diseases, transnational issues, trade and investment, and peace and security. In 2007, ASEAN and the United Nations signed a Memorandum of Understanding providing for regular consultations on matters of strategic importance, with a further joint pledge in 2008 to intensify cooperation. In 2009, as an indication of the partnership coming of age, the ESCAP Executive Secretary became the first United Nations official to be invited to speak on regional connectivity at the 4th East Asia Summit, which brought together Leaders of the 10 ASEAN member States, and of Australia, China, India, Japan, The Republic of Korea and New Zealand.

ASEAN’s main point of coordination with the United Nations system at the regional level is ESCAP, in its capacities as the Chair of the UN’s Asia-Pacific Coordination Mechanism (RCM) and as the regional development arm of the UN. Established in 1998 by the Economic and Social Council, the RCM consists of 30 United Nations and affiliated entities. It is chaired by the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General once a year and by the Secretary-General of the United Nations when he visits the regional Commission. Its aim is to increase collaboration among its members and their development partners in addressing regional development issues to provide policy coherence and to ensure that the United Nations ‘delivers as one’ at the regional level.

The United Nations system has supported ASEAN in virtually all its endeavours, including in the establishment of a common market; regional connectivity; rights of migrant workers; disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response; environmental sustainability and climate change; food security; health systems; prevention and control of communicable diseases, including HIV/AIDS; education; gender equality; human rights and governance; and data collection, monitoring and review of key development indicators. It has much to offer to ASEAN in closing its development gaps.

Directions for the future

Potential areas of cooperation between ASEAN and the United Nations span a very broad range. But the overarching theme is to contribute to the provision of regional public goods — the consumption of which by one State does not prevent consumption by another — that are central to achieving the goal of an ASEAN Community. The challenges that lie ahead of the two organizations are many. In the emerging ‘new normal’ of the global economic and political order, ASEAN is an inseparable part of an Asia-Pacific awakening to its true potential. ASEAN Leaders have recognized this and embraced a strategy of exploiting the potential of regional economic cooperation and integration — both among themselves and with the rest of Asia and the Pacific — as the key to future growth and stability.

The Third ASEAN-United Nations Summit in October 2010 will renew the partnership in a spirit of mutual trust and respect. Both organizations share a common agenda to strive together for prosperity, equity, stability and peace — the defining cornerstones of inclusive development for all.
CHAPTER I
THE ASEAN ACHIEVEMENT
The Association of Southeast Asian Nations has been one of the world's more durable regional groupings. After more than four decades, it is now aiming to renew itself as an ‘ASEAN Community, with a new charter that creates opportunities for a stronger and more cohesive organization, and a new mission seeking deeper integration among its member States and with the rest of Asia and the Pacific.

Towards the ASEAN Community

The direction of future ASEAN-United Nations cooperation will be determined primarily by the ways in which ASEAN itself continues to evolve. When five countries of South-East Asia founded ASEAN in 1967, they were attempting to build or rebuild their own nations in the post-colonial, low-trust climate of the Cold War. For their new regional organization, they therefore chose a loose form of intergovernmental association. The first binding treaty for South-East Asia – the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) – appeared in 1976. It identified three key principles: respect for the territorial integrity of member States, non-interference in each other's domestic affairs, and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

ASEAN countries complemented these principles with their own distinctive understanding of governance. Across South-East Asia, democracy was limited, with governments typically hierarchical and paternalistic. Small networks of technocratically-minded elites took most of the decisions, often privately and informally. There was a tendency to trade social and political freedom for strong economic performance.

Like all other international organizations, ASEAN has had to adjust to a rapidly changing global environment – which involves realigning itself with other institutions and groupings of countries, including the United Nations. The purpose of this study is to reflect on these changes and, more specifically, on the development of ASEAN’s cooperation with the UN. In the complex political, economic and socio-cultural realignment unfolding across the world now, this study cannot offer an elaborate roadmap, but it can signpost some of the potential for future collaboration as ASEAN moves into a new phase.
meetings have often resulted in generally phrased resolutions and non-binding commitments.

For several decades, this mode of governance served ASEAN well. Disparate member States found ways to cooperate on resolvable issues while putting sensitive, contentious matters on the back burner. They could, for example, take credit for maintaining peace in the region, for being instrumental in pulling Viet Nam out of Cambodia and, until 1997, generally achieving impressive economic growth.

This model was called into question, however, by the Asian financial crisis of 1997. Globalization, and particularly the liberalization of the financial sector, exposed many countries to new economic risks and uncertainties. It also had serious implications for the model of economic paternalism. In some countries, the crisis and its aftermath undermined national elites. It weakened their claim to be consistently competent economic managers who could be trusted to act on behalf of the population as a whole – fracturing the implicit pact that had involved sacrificing full democratic accountability for sound economic performance.

Moreover, the crisis exposed an inherent weakness in ASEAN as an institution. In its reluctance to impose rules on its members, it had failed to develop robust financial procedures or institutions that might, for example, have been able to stabilize financial markets by imposing general controls on volatile and disruptive flows of capital.

Since then, ASEAN has had to look afresh at how it should function in a new global environment – a world in which economic and political powers are distributed in different ways, and where people have higher expectations of how international organizations should function. In response, over the years ASEAN has evolved what is referred to as a loose, ‘three-track’ framework. Governments relate to each other through Track 1, while non-governmental organizations are represented, in a more limited way, through Tracks 2 and 3.

The pressures on ASEAN to recast itself as a more coherent whole have become more intense now. If the 1997 Asian financial crisis was a catalyst for change, the larger — and far more complex — 2008 global financial and economic crisis has been a trigger for hastening that change as ASEAN confronts its impacts and implications. In the emerging ‘new normal’ of the global economic and political order, ASEAN is an inseparable part of an Asia-Pacific awakening to its true potential. It has much to gain by riding the winds of change and much to lose by trailing behind. The notion of an ‘ASEAN Community’ is not just a matter of ASEAN’s consolidation. It might be the key to the continued prosperity and well-being of its people in a world that is changing by the day.

How ASEAN works

Intergovernmental process (Track 1)

ASEAN’s highest decision-making body is the annual Summit of Heads of State and Government. Below this, it holds various ministerial meetings, which take place around twice a year, of which those for foreign ministers carry the greatest weight. There are also over 100 senior official committees and working groups. The number of meetings has expanded and the Secretary-General of ASEAN is expected to attend all summits and ministerial meetings, although, just half a decade ago, ASEAN was viewed as having less activity between meetings as compared with other regional bodies (Muthiah, 2003).

ASEAN’s principal institution is its Jakarta-based Secretariat. It has a staff of 60 officials recruited from ASEAN Member States and 150 support staff recruited locally. So far, it has had limited capacity and authority. The ASEAN Charter will give the Secretariat much more responsibility, though for this it would need significant additional human and financial resources.

The main work organs of ASEAN are the Standing Committee, which meets six times a year, and various sub-committees (Nguyen and Westcott, 2007). This is soon to be replaced by the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN in Jakarta. The main work in ASEAN is done by the 26 ASEAN Ministerial bodies assisted by their senior officials meetings or committees.

The ASEAN Summit is strong on protocol and symbolism, and sets a general agenda. But it does not closely manage ASEAN cooperation. Nor do the Ministerial Meetings and various specialized bodies and arrangements, which focus on specific sectors or narrow fields of work and thus find it difficult to consider the whole picture or the impact that ASEAN might be having on the lives and welfare of its population.

Formal decision-making in ASEAN is an exclusively intergovernmental affair that has taken great care not to alienate member States. This means decision-making is time-consuming as it has to go through extensive rounds of consultations. ASEAN does, however, have a procedure by which one country can abstain from a particular issue or project as long as it is not totally opposed to it. The origin of this mechanism can be traced to the 1970s when
Singapore decided not to go along with a diesel-making project but did not object to the others’ participation. This approach to flexible participation in implementing economic commitments is now known as ‘ASEAN–X’ (Phar, 2003).

ASEAN is also represented in each member country by a national secretariat within the foreign ministry which has overall responsibility for ASEAN affairs and coordinates the country’s implementation of ASEAN decisions. Outside the ministry of foreign affairs, decision-makers dealing with ASEAN come from technical agencies, such as departments or ministries, but these people still seek the advice of their foreign ministry on all matters relevant to ASEAN. The line ministries have greater influence now that their sectors and issues have emerged at the ASEAN level. However, if anything, this can make authority even more blurred. Rivalry between ministries can hinder work, and in a centralized system will always need clearance from the highest authorities (Zakaria, 2003).

Overall therefore, Track 1 has lacked an integrated or forceful decision-making structure and monitoring mechanism.

**Academic institutions and think tanks (Track 2)**

The key informal influence on many ASEAN policies has been the academic community – the institutions and think tanks that form ‘Track 2’. Within ASEAN, Track 2 entities serve the important function of allowing discussions and negotiations to be conducted, and positions to be voiced and analysed, in an ‘informal’ non-governmental atmosphere. They are the testing ground for initiatives that may subsequently be formally accepted by ASEAN Track 1 decision-making bodies. They have greater freedom to venture into sensitive areas and can also serve as mediators between Track 1 decision makers and the people they represent.

In the political field, the most important Track 2 body is the ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN-ISIS). This is a network of nine leading strategic studies institutes across the ASEAN region. The network has helped form a sense of community among ASEAN policy and intellectual leaders, and has opened policy dialogues between government officials, think tanks and policy analysts. A corresponding organization in the security field is the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP). This has 21 members in ASEAN and beyond, with a Steering Committee served by a secretariat in Kuala Lumpur at the Institute of Strategic and International Studies, Malaysia.

ASEAN-ISIS is widely considered to be the most established academic network working on ASEAN issues and it has been the key actor in developing the concept of Track 2 diplomacy, that is, the policy dialogue involving government officials, think tanks and policy analysts. The success of ASEAN-ISIS in penetrating the policymaking processes at the regional level is evidenced by the institutionalization of meetings between ASEAN-ISIS and the ASEAN Senior Official Meeting (SOM); the acknowledgement of the role of ASEAN-ISIS in the Joint Communiqués of the ASEAN Ministerial Meetings (AMM) since 1991; and the solicitation by ASEAN SOM of ASEAN-ISIS views on issues that ASEAN senior officials would like to have studied further prior to making official policy (Chandra, 2006).

**Civil society organizations (Track 3)**

If the ASEAN Community is to function effectively and be truly representative, it will require stronger grassroots interactions. ASEAN-ISIS has, therefore, helped open communication channels with civil society across the region – a process which has become known as Track 3. The most formal of these channels is the ASEAN People’s Assembly (APA). During the 1990s, ASEAN officials endorsed the principle of a people’s mechanism, though some member States had reservations and blocked funding for its establishment. Nevertheless, ASEAN-ISIS persisted and eventually secured mainly non-ASEAN funding. The APA has subsequently held meetings in parallel with those of the Heads of State and Government. Nevertheless, many civil society organizations have become disenchanted with the APA, seeing it as a place where civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and civic organizations can meet but not one which offers much opportunity to influence decision-making (Caballero-Anthony, 2004).

Another official, though less recognized, Track 3 channel forum is the ASEAN Civil Society Conference (ACSC). This was an initiative of the Government of Malaysia and intended as a one-off event at the 11th Summit in Kuala Lumpur in 2005 where academia and NGOs, with the support of the ASEAN Secretariat, organized a conference and presented a statement to the ASEAN Heads of State and Government. Subsequently, it has become an annual event (Chandra, 2006).

An emerging civil society player is the Solidarity for Asian People’s Advocacy (SAPA) network. This too was a response to the slow progress of the APA, and to differences of opinion between academics and
other representatives from civil society about the way in which ASEAN should pursue integration. Unlike the APA, however, neither the ACSC nor SAPA is mentioned in any formal ASEAN documents.

While ASEAN as a whole has not fully embraced civil society groups, it should be noted that some of the difficulties lie with the CSOs themselves. They have yet to agree on how and to what extent they want to engage with ASEAN. Then there is the issue of which CSOs to include for cooperation, given their large numbers and variations in expertise and interests, and the fact that, despite their claims, they are not representative of all citizens. Moreover, some CSOs may make generic or unrealistic demands that make it difficult for them to be involved constructively and collaboratively – particularly on fundamental issues, such as democracy or human rights.

However, all these issues can be resolved and ASEAN should be able to involve CSOs more closely, particularly those specialist organizations working on single issues which can serve as advisers to regional and international organizations. Furthermore, CSOs with extensive networks can mobilize the public and raise stronger awareness of ASEAN – a valuable resource for ASEAN, given its low levels of public recognition and overall weak regional identity. ASEAN could also involve civil society in monitoring and evaluation functions, and in actively advocating implementation of agreements at national and regional levels.

**Working with business**

An ‘unofficial’ fourth track — one that has risen in importance over the years to gain recognition at the highest levels of ASEAN — is the interaction within the business community across ASEAN member States and its collective influence on ASEAN’s decision-making process.

Since its founding, ASEAN has also striven to work with regional business networks. One of the most important has been the ASEAN Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASEAN-CCI), which was founded after the 4th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in 1971. The ASEAN-CCI has allowed the business community to provide inputs and voice its concerns. It played an important part in the creation of the ASEAN Free Trade Area and has lobbied for more regular and frequent meetings of the ASEAN Summit.

Other networks emerged during the 1980s and 1990s. The ASEAN Business Forum, for example, was established in 1994 and the ASEAN Business Advisory Council in 2003. These and other institutions have promoted their interests while also contributing to an informal bottom-up process of regionalization (Chandra, 2006).

In spite of these developments, the business community became somewhat disillusioned with ASEAN. Business leaders complained they were not consulted in the planning and implementation of ASEAN projects. As a result, many schemes failed because they did not correspond to realities or needs on the ground. An early example was the 1981 ASEAN Industrial Complementation Scheme. This was intended to develop industrial projects, using components assembled from different ASEAN states. But the guidelines were drawn up without private sector participation and have been described by ASEAN business leaders as impractical and inflexible.

In an effort to address such issues, ASEAN Heads of State and Government, at the 7th ASEAN Summit held in Bandar Seri Begawan in November 2001, established the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN-BAC), to promote public-private sector partnership in achieving ASEAN integration. ASEAN-BAC provides private sector feedback on the implementation of ASEAN economic cooperation and identifies priority areas for the consideration of ASEAN Leaders. Inaugurated at the ASEAN Summit in April 2003, ASEAN-BAC has taken key initiatives, including the annual ASEAN Business and Investment Summit (ASEAN-BIS), which is held back-to-back or in conjunction with the ASEAN Summit. ASEAN-BIS brings together some 1,000 public and private sector delegates, including captains of commerce and industry, from within and outside of ASEAN for dialogue and networking, to advance business in the ASEAN Economic Community. ASEAN-BAC also organizes the annual ASEAN Business Awards to recognize outstanding ASEAN companies contributing to ASEAN economic growth and prosperity.

In April 2007, to promote greater awareness of the ASEAN Economic Community, the ASEAN Secretariat held an ASEAN Talks Business that was attended by more than 50 business leaders. In response, ASEAN-BIS will be organizing its summit on the sidelines of the 17th ASEAN Summit in October 2010 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam under the theme ‘Towards the ASEAN Community: From Vision to Action’. A highlight of the event will be the announcement of ASEAN Business Awards to “outstanding ASEAN businesses that have contributed to regional economic growth and prosperity”. Also indicative of the dynamism of ASEAN business is the number of associations as exemplified in one sector alone, transport, by the Federation of ASEAN Shipowners’
Building on the three pillars

Compared to other regional organizations which have stronger institutional structures and have entered into mutually-binding legal agreements, ASEAN is a much looser association. As an organization, it has issued many declarations, often expressed in general terms, and which poorer member States in particular may lack the capacity to implement. Nevertheless, it can point to a number of successes in building what since 2003 have been referred to as the three pillars of an envisaged ‘ASEAN Community’ – the Security Community, the Economic Community and the Socio-Cultural Community.

The Security Community

ASEAN can be seen as a regional force for peace and stability. The opportunity for regular meetings has helped national leaders build personal relationships and establish a degree of mutual confidence. Since its founding, notwithstanding occasional border conflicts, no two ASEAN members have had a large-scale war. In the 1980s, ASEAN was instrumental in resolving issues arising out of Viet Nam’s incursion into Cambodia.

ASEAN was responsible for founding the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 1994. This has become Asia’s principal arena for dialogue on peace and security. The ARF comprises 27 countries: in addition to the 10 ASEAN states, it includes ASEAN’s 10 ‘dialogue partners’ – Australia, Canada, China, the European Union, India, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and the United States, along with one ASEAN observer, Papua New Guinea – as well as the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Mongolia, Pakistan, Timor-Leste, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

ASEAN has also been instrumental in the establishment of other regional forums with a security agenda, such as the ASEAN+3 process (ASEAN plus China, Japan and the Republic of Korea), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), and the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD).

**BOX I-1**

The Chiang Mai Initiative

The Chiang Mai Initiative, announced by the ASEAN+3 finance ministers in May 2000, consists of four areas of cooperation: swap networks, monitoring capital flows, regional surveillance, and the training of personnel. The swap arrangements have two elements: an expanded ASEAN Swap Arrangement (ASA), and Bilateral Swap Arrangements (BSAs). These allow countries to exchange their local currency for US dollars in case of ‘temporary international liquidity problems’.

The expanded ASA of 2000 included all 10 ASEAN countries, with ASEAN-6 contributing more than the newer entrants. The swap currencies were extended to include the yen and the euro. Countries could borrow up to twice the amount of their contribution for up to one year. The total size of the fund was to be $1 billion which was expanded in May 2005 to $2 billion.

The BSAs allowed for swaps of local currencies, mainly for US dollars, between each of the three ASEAN+3 countries, with each other and with the 10 ASEAN member States. The ASEAN framework agreement laid out the basic principles, although each BSA may differ somewhat in its specific terms. As of May 2007, there were 16 BSAs with a total of $83 billion in swaps between eight countries – China, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Although theoretically any ASEAN country could undertake a BSA, in reality the main beneficiaries were Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia. Newer and less well-off ASEAN countries have relied instead on foreign aid.

In response to the recent global financial crisis, work on an expanded Chiang Mai Initiative, already agreed to in principle in May 2007, was accelerated. The expanded Initiative, known as the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization (CMIM), was signed in December 2009 and took effect in March 2010. The Initiative has an increased size of $120 billion and a self-managed reserve-pooling mechanism governed by a legally binding single contract. All 13 nations contribute to the fund and still manage their own reserves. This is a key change from the outcome of the old system of BSAs where ASEAN+3 countries were contributors and beneficiaries whereas the 10 ASEAN member States were solely beneficiaries. The expanded CMI arrangement is based on a number of strict criteria – on surveillance, access to borrowing, activation processes, decision-making arrangements and covenants. In May 2010, agreement was reached on all the key elements of the regional macroeconomic surveillance unit of the CMIM, called the ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO). The AMRO will monitor and analyze regional economies, which contributes to the early detection of risks, swift implementation of remedial actions, and effective decision-making of the CMIM.
The Economic Community

Another of ASEAN’s primary tasks has been to promote economic integration. This process has largely been market driven as the ASEAN region has been a favourable location for investment and production by many multinational enterprises. Accordingly, ASEAN countries have become indispensable building blocks of ‘Asia’s factory’. ASEAN itself has also become more active in pursuing economic cooperation. Some of the most important measures for economic integration include:

ASEAN Free Trade Area

The ASEAN Free Trade Agreements set the path towards an ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA). This includes a Common Effective Preferential Tariff Scheme, signed in 1992, which allows for a flexible approach to liberalization. As a result, for the more developed countries that make up the ASEAN-6, applied tariffs have been reduced to between zero and five per cent, and should reach zero by 2010. The other four countries, ASEAN’s newer members, Cambodia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Viet Nam (CLMV), are expected to reach that target by 2015.

Falling tariffs have promoted a steady increase in intra-ASEAN trade which, for ASEAN countries, was running at over 25 per cent of their total trade in 2008. This might be seen as a fairly small proportion – compared to the EU-15, for which intra-regional trade makes up around 60 per cent of their total trade. But ASEAN’s trade has to be considered within the context of its integration with wider production systems in East Asia. Moreover, trade is much more important for ASEAN than it is for some other regional groupings. Its overall trade to GDP ratio is around 170 per cent compared to 75 per cent for the EU-15 and 32 per cent for the countries of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Chiang Mai Initiative

The financial crisis of 1997 caused a massive outflow of capital across ASEAN, resulting in severe depreciations in exchange rates, obliging countries to seek more than $100 billion from the International Monetary Fund under stringent conditions. To avoid a similar scenario in the future – and the severe conditionality – ASEAN countries have been building up their own national reserves. In addition, they have established a homegrown currency support system – relying on the mutual exchange of reserves. The result, in 2000, was the Chiang Mai Initiative – a system of bilateral currency swaps using a portion of the foreign exchange reserves of ASEAN+3 countries. In May 2007, in lieu of the previous system of bilateral swaps, ASEAN+3 agreed in principle to pool a portion of their foreign exchange reserves. The result is the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization (CMIM) (Box 1).

Transport agreements

ASEAN countries have made a commitment to work together towards regional connectivity as a part of the broader intergovernmental agreements on the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks (Figures I-1 & I-2). Since 1999, ASEAN countries have taken steps to implement the Ministerial Understanding on the Development of the ASEAN Highway Network Project at the 5th ASEAN Transport Ministers Meeting in Ha Noi in 1999 and have made progress in bringing up the standards of the roads across the network. Meanwhile, work on ASEAN’s flagship transport project on the Singapore-Kunming Rail Link (SKRL) — which will link Cambodia, China, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam — sets out a clear plan for building links both within and between countries.

Recognizing the cost of non-physical barriers to trade, ASEAN has concluded a series of agreements relating to land transport facilitation and multimodal transport. The 1998 ASEAN Framework Agreement on the Facilitation of Goods in Transit deals, among other things, with the designation of transit transport routes and facilities, the technical requirements of vehicles and an ASEAN scheme of compulsory motor vehicle insurance. Collaboration between the ASEAN’s subset countries of the Greater-Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation (GMS) and China has also resulted in the GMS Cross-Border Transport Agreement. Other important facilitation agreements are the ASEAN Framework Agreements on the Facilitation of Inter-state Transport, Agreement on the Recognition of Commercial Vehicle Inspection Certificates for Goods Vehicles and Public Service Vehicles and the ASEAN Framework Agreements on Multimodal Transport.

Initiative for ASEAN Integration

A truly integrated ASEAN Community will mean reducing disparities between richer and poorer members. To some extent, this will require a transfer of resources across the economies. ASEAN has established programmes, such as the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI), for the purpose. The IAI is devoted largely to ‘soft infrastructure’ through studies and training, with projects on infrastructure, human resource development, information and telecommunications technology, capacity building for regional economic integration, tourism, poverty and quality of life. Assistance for most of ASEAN’s ‘hard infrastructure’ still comes from international
FIGURE I-1
Trans-Asian Railway, ASEAN region

FIGURE I-2
Asian Highway, ASEAN region
The Socio-cultural Community

ASEAN envisions a “community of cohesive, equitable and harmonious societies, bound together in solidarity for deeper understanding and cooperation” (ASEAN, 2004). This remains a longer-term aspiration since there are still wide disparities between member States. Efforts to reduce these could include, for example, intra-regional monetary transfers and technical cooperation, as well as regional standards on health and labour, and on the protection of vulnerable groups. ASEAN has a number of relevant declarations. Many are yet to be implemented but ASEAN has achieved significant cooperation in some areas, including the following:

Disaster management

ASEAN’s Committee on Disaster Management has been developing frameworks for cooperation. Priority projects under the ASEAN Regional Programme on Disaster Management include the establishment of an ASEAN Regional Disaster Management Framework, activities under which emphasize the development of standard operating procedures and disaster response mechanisms. The Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 was a wake-up call for strong early-warning systems, including at the regional and subregional levels. During a special ASEAN Leaders’ meeting in January 2005, ASEAN Leaders and heads of regional and international organizations agreed to establish a regional early-warning system and develop the necessary human and scientific capacity. ASEAN’s contribution to post-disaster response was also demonstrated in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis in May 2008, the worst to strike Asia in 15 years, killing more than 140,000 people and affecting more than 2.4 million (OCHA, 2008). ASEAN helped bridge the psychological gap between Myanmar and the rest of the world, and in building trust and cooperation between the Government of Myanmar and the international community.

Communicable diseases

ASEAN has also enabled its member countries to work together on communicable diseases, particularly those with cross-border implications. In 2003, for example, ASEAN convened with China a summit in Bangkok on Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) which agreed to implement stringent measures to contain the spread of the disease. ASEAN was the first region in the world with a region-wide, multisectoral response to SARS, and within two months, it had become SARS-free. In 2003, ASEAN Health Ministers adopted a Framework

1 As an outcome of the post-Nargis ASEAN-United Nations partnership to help the Government of Myanmar, ASEAN is now considering an institutionalization of its disaster management cooperation with the United Nations system as a whole.
ASEAN+3 Action Plan on Prevention and Control of SARS and other Infectious Diseases focusing on four priority areas: measures for international travel, strengthening the regional network of focal points, public education, and capacity building to respond to future outbreaks of new and emerging diseases.

Transboundary environmental challenges

Rapid growth and the exploitation of natural resources continue to place pressure on ASEAN’s natural capital, with much of this pressure of a transboundary nature. ASEAN has been successful in creating relatively well-coordinated foundations for collective responses to key transboundary environmental challenges, such as haze, loss of biodiversity, water security and marine pollution. ASEAN action on transboundary haze remains one of the most important ASEAN achievements against its transboundary environmental challenges. Following severe episodes in 2006 and 2007, the five countries most affected – Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand – agreed to come together as the Subregional Ministerial Steering Committee on Transboundary Haze Pollution and endorsed Indonesia’s Plan of Action. ASEAN member States have also, in cooperation with the Government of Indonesia, been offering capacity-building support to Indonesia’s fire-prone areas. Singapore, for example, is helping with a master plan for the Muaro Jambi district, while Malaysia will provide technical assistance for Riau province.

The policy of non-intervention has, however, been cited as a constraint on implementing various environmental agreements, declarations and action plans, including agreements on transboundary haze. Lack of capacity at the national level also hinders effective implementation. The environmental pressures of ASEAN’s growing demand for energy under current energy development pathways, the projected demand for other resources — such as water and agricultural land — and the impact of climate change on these resources — imply ASEAN’s approaches to environmentally sustainable development need to be re-examined.

ASEAN Foundation

Another aim under the Socio-Cultural pillar is to promote ASEAN identity-building in support of an ASEAN Community – by “creating a greater sense of ASEAN awareness and belonging in the people’s hearts and minds” (ASEAN Foundation, 2006) and by “fostering a cohesive ASEAN cooperation... especially in dealing with growing regional problems that can only be met with regional solutions...” (ASEAN Foundation, 2006). This is one of the functions of the ASEAN Foundation established in 1997.

In recent years, the Foundation has intensified activities to raise public consciousness of ASEAN through human resource development activities in four sectors: social development; science and technology; environment; and culture and information. Its activities have targeted groups as diverse as youth, fisherfolk, farmers, small and medium entrepreneurs, ICT users, health practitioners and cultural performers. While the Foundation has worked hard to make ASEAN more relevant to its people, it recognizes the need for further initiatives to promote more people-to-people exchanges in the region for ASEAN to be better heard and more visible among its people. Current priorities include building ASEAN awareness and identity, science and technology projects, scholarships and poverty alleviation (The Jakarta Post, 2008). Funding for the ASEAN Foundation comes from an endowment provided by member States, and further contributions from external donors, particularly Japan. The external partners of the Foundation include China, the Republic of Korea, France, the International Development Research Centre of Canada and private corporations, such as Microsoft. The Foundation hopes to gain more funds from the private sector in the future to enable young people in ASEAN countries to learn more about neighbouring countries and their cultures.

The ASEAN Charter

ASEAN took one of its most significant steps in 2003 when member Governments adopted the Bali Concord II – establishing the three pillars of the ASEAN Community — to constitute a ‘just, democratic and harmonious environment’. The Kuala Lumpur Summit in 2005 assembled an Eminent Persons Group (EPG) to make recommendations for an ‘ASEAN Charter’ that would provide a legal and institutional framework for realizing the ASEAN Community. The EPG consulted widely with civil society groups, representatives from the academic community, the private sector and parliamentarians through meetings and written proposals, before submitting its report to the ASEAN Summit in 2006 where it was considered by a high-level Task Force, consisting mainly of former ambassadors (Morada, 2008).

The Task Force presented the Charter for signing at the 13th ASEAN Summit in Singapore in November 2007. To a large extent, it codified existing ASEAN practice. Many civil society organizations were disappointed with the Charter as it was less ambitious than the recommendations of the EPG. They felt it had been drafted too hastily without meaningful public consultation – thus missing an opportunity for promoting ASEAN and regional identity.
Nonetheless, even as it stands, the Charter contains the seeds of further debate since some of its provisions may be difficult to reconcile with one another. On the one hand, Article 2.1 states that “ASEAN and its Member States reaffirm and adhere to the fundamental principles contained in the declarations, agreements, conventions, concords, treaties and other instruments of ASEAN”. Together with some of the principles listed in its Article 2.2, such as respect for sovereignty and non-interference, this not only reiterates, but further legalizes and institutionalizes the classic ASEAN norms. This, however, is balanced in Article 2.2 (b) on collective responsibility, and (g) enhanced consultations on matters seriously affecting the common interest of ASEAN. Moreover, Article 2.2 (h) and (i) list a set of qualitatively new norms, such as adherence to the rule of law, good governance, the principles of democracy and constitutional government, respect for fundamental freedoms, the promotion and protection of human rights, and the promotion of social justice.

Given the national political and social realities in a number of ASEAN member States, some of these new norms might not be implemented in the near future — ASEAN thus faces a difficult task. To reinvent itself as a responsive regional actor, it has to adopt more inclusive and participatory approaches, and move towards formal, rules-based mechanisms of decision-making. However, reforming ASEAN’s institutional governance will also require corresponding reform at domestic levels. Realistically, ASEAN is likely to move in small steps and transform its norms gradually.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the Charter offers citizens of ASEAN member States – and the world at large – a crucial legal document for holding ASEAN accountable and ensuring it fulfils its own commitments. In November 2008, all 10 ASEAN member States ratified the Charter, and the instrument of ratification was deposited with the ASEAN Secretary-General at the Permanent Mission of Thailand to the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The ASEAN Charter entered into force on 15 December 2008.

**Into a new phase**

ASEAN can be proud of its success in preserving peace across the region and creating opportunities for economic and social cooperation. Many challenges lie ahead as ASEAN aspires to become a stronger organization in order to respond rapidly and cohesively to the economic, social and political risks in a tightly interdependent world which is undergoing an unprecedented shift in its economic and political alignments. Narrowing the development gaps among ASEAN member States and realizing the vision of an ASEAN Community are crucial outcomes expected from this transition. These outcomes will be shaped as much by ASEAN’s achievements so far as they will be by ASEAN’s ability to adapt to the changes that are taking place in its environment now.
CHAPTER II
GROWING TOGETHER
The 10 ASEAN nations can claim a degree of integration and a narrowing of some of their development gaps. However, they are still far apart in many respects, not just in political systems and socio-cultural identities, but also in terms of economic progress and standards of human development. Much more needs to be done to achieve the vision of an “ASEAN Community”. This chapter takes a closer look at what has been achieved so far and highlights where the remaining gaps are.

One way to assess ASEAN’s success at integration is to consider the extent to which the countries of the region have become more similar – in both economic and social terms. The analysis here builds on the 2007 ESCAP report, *Ten as One: Challenges and Opportunities for ASEAN Integration* (ESCAP, 2007c). The report was prepared by ESCAP at the request of the ASEAN Secretary-General and shared with ASEAN Foreign Ministers at their 2008 meeting in Singapore. It concluded that wide intercountry disparities in development outcomes were still prevalent in the ASEAN region, particularly in environmental sustainability, health and infrastructure.

This should come as little surprise since the richest member, Singapore, is now classified as a high-income country with a constant dollar GDP per capita 65 times greater than that of the three poorest ASEAN countries. Similar contrasts are evident in social indicators, such as under-five mortality: in Singapore, only 3 children per 1,000 die before reaching the age of five; in Cambodia, the number is 90, while in Myanmar it is 98.

The following analysis is enhanced by focusing on the changes over time of development outcome disparities among the ASEAN countries. There are many possible factors that can contribute to a reduction of intercountry disparities. Any narrowing of gaps in outcomes cannot, therefore, be automatically attributed to regional integration. The persistence or any increase of such gaps, however, can be taken as an indication that regional integration is “not working”. Also, importantly, intercountry disparities are not a measure of progress by individual countries. Indeed, no ASEAN country has stood still on any of the indicators during the period covered by the analysis. The progress, or the lack of it, in a country is measured here mainly as a matter of variation in pace in relation to other countries in the region.

**Economic integration**

The extent of disparities can be assessed using the Gini index, which is commonly employed to measure income distribution within countries. A Gini index of 0 would indicate absolute equality in income distribution, with everyone having the same income, while an index of 100 would represent absolute inequality, with one person owning everything. In practice, the indices typically vary from 30 to 60 across the world. In the ASEAN region, the national Gini indices for income are not particularly high, nor very different: the highest index was 44 in the Philippines in 2004, and the lowest was 38 in Malaysia and Viet Nam (ESCAP, 2009).

The same technique can be used to assess other kinds of inequality – as in the economic disparities between ASEAN nations. Larger values of the index of a particular indicator would suggest greater overall disparities among the ASEAN nations on that indicator. On the other hand, smaller values would indicate relatively smaller intercountry differences. Figure II-1 shows the Gini indices for a number of economic indicators. Figure II-2 shows how these have moved over time. As can be seen, there are still large intercountry disparities in various aspects of the economy, indicating much remains to be done to achieve regional integration — not just in terms of income, but also in other areas, such as ownership of personal computers, road infrastructure, employment structure and labour productivity. This is not to say no progress has been made. As discussed further down, some indices, notably in the ICT area, have declined quite dramatically over the past two decades. But they are outnumbered by others that have stagnated or risen.
Money and exchange rates

The countries of ASEAN have little immediate prospect of introducing a common currency. Nevertheless, there are some signs of convergence in monetary and related indicators. Central bank discount rates, for example, have been moving closer since 2000 although, following the 2008 financial and economic crisis, they have tended to diverge due to country differences in responses to the crisis. Exchange rate fluctuations have declined sharply since 2005, signalling ASEAN has tried to avoid competitive, beggar-thy-neighbour, devaluations. There are still, however, significant differences in inflation rates – a crucial determinant of savings and investment. Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand have coped better with the rise in commodity prices, with inflation rates of around 5.4 to 6.5 per cent in July 2008, compared to more than 20 per cent in Cambodia, Myanmar and Viet Nam. Nor has there been a consistent pattern of change since 1990: the rates converged from 1990 to 1996, diverged from 1996 to 1999, converged again from 1999 to 2005, but diverged once more from 2006 onwards — suggesting fiscal policies remain influenced by national priorities.

Labour market

ASEAN demonstrates striking disparities in labour productivity. These are a result of large differences, not only in the technologies used, but also in the economic structures of member States. Taking productivity in Singapore in 2008 — $45,786 (in 1990 constant PPP dollar) – twice that of the next richest country, Brunei Darussalam ($12,837), and more than 65 times greater than that of the three poorest countries — Viet Nam ($276), Myanmar ($324) and Cambodia ($376). Despite rapid internal growth in the poorest countries, the intercountry gap has shown little sign of narrowing as the affluent countries have grown just as fast. As a result, the Gini index for ASEAN as a whole has been more or less constant at about 69 since 1990. If there is to be convergence, the poorer countries need to grow much faster than the richer ones. It is necessary to emphasize that the Gini index here reflects the extent of disparities in the level of income between, rather than within, the ASEAN countries.

Income

The ASEAN economies cover a very broad spectrum. In 2008, the GDP per capita of Singapore was $24,516 (in 1990 constant PPP dollar) – twice that of the next richest country, Brunei Darussalam ($12,837), and more than 65 times greater than that of the three poorest countries — Viet Nam ($276), Myanmar ($324) and Cambodia ($376). Despite rapid internal growth in the poorest countries, the intercountry gap has shown little sign of narrowing as the affluent countries have grown just as fast. As a result, the Gini index for ASEAN as a whole has been more or less constant at about 69 since 1990. If there is to be convergence, the poorer countries need to grow much faster than the richer ones. It is necessary to emphasize that the Gini index here reflects the extent of disparities in the level of income between, rather than within, the ASEAN countries.

FIGURE II-1
Economic disparities among ASEAN countries

Gini indices of selected economic indicators, latest year (2005-2009)

Note: See Annex for definitions and explanations of the indicators.

Unemployment rates varied across the region in 2008, from 1.2 per cent in Thailand to 8.4 per cent in Indonesia, and the overall trend seems to be towards divergence. Nor has there been much change in employment structures. For instance, the share of own account workers and contributing family members in total employment — an indication of the proportion of the workforce in the informal sector and in vulnerable employment — differed from 87 per cent in Cambodia and 74 per cent in Viet Nam to
22 per cent in Malaysia and 10 per cent in Singapore (United Nations, 2010b). The overall gaps in the indicator have remained large and the Gini index shows little change over time.

**Basic infrastructure**

Overall intercountry gaps remained constant at around 40 for the proportion of paved roads across ASEAN member countries. This indicator may be viewed as a broad proxy for progress with several other basic infrastructure elements, such as electricity and water supply systems, schools, health centres, markets and places of employment — especially in rural areas where the lack of paved all-weather roads inhibits infrastructure development at large. In 2007, all roads in Singapore were paved, as were 80 per cent of those in Malaysia and 77 per cent in Brunei Darussalam — with the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Myanmar lagging far behind at 15 per cent. This owes largely to the geographical and economic diversity of ASEAN countries. However, it is worth noting that road quality has improved considerably in recent years for the ASEAN intraregional component of the Asian Highway Network.

**Information and communications technology**

In contrast, there has been a rapid convergence in the diffusion of information and communications technology (ICT). Gini indices have come down for fixed line and mobile cellular telephone subscriptions, ownership of personal computers, and access to the Internet. Intercountry gaps in the use of cellular phones have narrowed steeply, with the Gini index registering a more than 50 per cent decline since 1990.

The expansion of mobile networks has been particularly impressive (Figure II-3). Between 2006 and 2008, mobile cellular subscriptions in the ASEAN region demonstrated the highest growth rate, rising by an annual average of 43 per cent, higher than South Asia (41 per cent) and significantly higher than East/North-East Asia (14 per cent) and Central Asia (16 per cent) (ESCAP, 2009). In 2009, mobile cellular subscribers per 100 inhabitants for Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam exceeded 100 per cent (ITU, 2009), implying many people in these countries owned more than one subscription. This is a clear indication that ASEAN countries are leapfrogging the constraints imposed by fixed line options and moving quickly.

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**FIGURE II-2**

Economic convergence and divergence in ASEAN

*Gini indices of selected economic indicators, 1990-2009*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Gini index</th>
<th>Labour productivity</th>
<th>GDP per capita</th>
<th>Inflation rate</th>
<th>Central bank discount rate</th>
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*Note: See Annex for definitions and explanations of the indicators.
Sources: IMF (2010); ILO (2009); United Nations (2009a, 2009b, 2010); World Bank (2010).*
to mobile communications, thus opening up a vast array of services that could empower the poor and build more inclusive societies. However, key policy challenges lie ahead. Of particular concern is how to strike a balance between policy flexibility to foster growth in these services and regulatory oversight to ensure minimum standards of security and consumer protection.

Notwithstanding these improvements, challenges remain in further reducing disparities in access to ICTs. For instance, the number of personal computers per 100 people as of 2006 varied from 73 in Singapore and 23 in Malaysia to 0.9 in Myanmar and 0.03 in Cambodia (United Nations, 2010). Similarly, the number of Internet users per 100 inhabitants varied from 80 in Brunei Darussalam, 77 in Singapore and 58 in Malaysia to 5 in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic 0.5 in Cambodia and 0.2 in Myanmar (ITU, 2009).

**Ease of doing business**

Economic integration also means making it easier for people to do business in different countries. This is less easy to capture statistically to make meaningful trend comparisons since the data are largely based on perceptions, and may not be comparable or offer sufficient details over time. However, according to the World Bank (2010), Singapore was the easiest country in the world to do business in. Thailand and Malaysia also ranked quite high, but most other countries in ASEAN performed poorly. Worryingly, compared to the previous year, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Philippines and Viet Nam all slipped in the rankings. Another concern is corruption with many countries performing poorly on the perception indices.

**Socio-cultural integration**

As with economic development, ASEAN countries also have very different attainments in socio-cultural development: people in the richer countries are likely to be healthier, better educated and longer lived. Figures II-4 and II-5 show the extent of disparities among the ASEAN countries on selected social indicators and how these disparities changed over time.

**Child mortality**

Within ASEAN, the most striking contrasts are in health, particularly for children and mothers. All ASEAN countries, particularly those with the worst situation in the early 1990s, have been able to bring down child mortality rates, thanks in large part to mass immunization (primarily for measles), and improvements in health systems and

---

**FIGURE II-3**  
Rapid diffusion of information and telecommunications technologies  
*Number of mobile cellular subscribers per 100 inhabitants, 1999-2009*  

service delivery. Despite very good progress, the child mortality rates per 1,000 live births are still alarmingly high in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (61), Cambodia (90) and Myanmar (98), compared to the relatively low rates in Singapore (3), Malaysia (6) and Brunei Darussalam (7) (UNICEF, 2010). The Gini index for the indicator has increased, suggesting countries are moving further apart. This probably reflects relatively larger improvements in the better performing countries, such as Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. In order to reverse the trend and reduce the disparities, much more remains to be done, particularly in the poorest countries.

Child malnutrition

Child malnutrition levels, as measured by the proportion of stunted children, are much higher than would be expected for the levels of economic development reached by ASEAN countries. When stunting (low height-for-age) occurs before the age of two years, its effects become long-term and include delayed motor development, impaired cognitive function and poor school performance, which are largely irreversible. Moreover, many ASEAN countries face the double burden of undernutrition and overnutrition (overweight and obesity), a phenomenon called “nutrition transition”. Although intercountry disparities in child malnutrition are lower than child mortality, the countries seem to be diverging. This is because countries that had prevalence rates of less than 25 per cent in 1993, such as Thailand and Malaysia, managed to reduce them further in comparison to countries with prevalence rates of more than 25 per cent (UNICEF, 2010).

Maternal mortality

ASEAN nations have made significant progress in improving maternal health, which is reflected by the decline in the number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births (maternal mortality ratio). Three countries with the highest maternal mortality ratios in the early 1990s saw a reduction of more than one half — the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (from 1,200 to 580), Cambodia (from 690 to 290) and Indonesia (from 620 to 240). Viet Nam was able to reduce its maternal mortality ratio even more, by two-thirds, from 170 in 1990 to 56 in 2008. In spite of this, the overall ASEAN Gini index for this indicator has been slow to decline.

Current levels of maternal mortality ratios in the poorest ASEAN countries remain quite high. Most deaths can be prevented if births are attended by skilled health personnel — doctors, nurses, midwives — who have the appropriate equipment and supplies and can refer women in a timely manner to properly-equipped obstetric care services when complications are diagnosed. Although the coverage of skilled attendance at delivery has increased in the region, there are significant disparities among countries. With the poorest 20 per cent having only 54 per cent coverage compared to 91 per cent coverage for the richest 20 per cent, there is much room for improvement in maternal health. Even in Brunei Darussalam where maternal mortality ratio is relatively low (21), and similar to that of the USA, it is still more than twice as high as in Australia and more than three times higher than in Japan (UNICEF, 2010; WHO, UNFPA and the World Bank, 2010).
HIV/AIDS

HIV continues to threaten the ASEAN population. In 2007, the infection levels in Thailand (1.4 per cent), Cambodia (0.8 per cent), and Myanmar (0.7 per cent) were among the highest in Asia. Nevertheless there has been considerable progress across the region, with some evidence of convergence. This indicates the strategy of targeted prevention for groups at risk can work.

Between 2006 and 2009, access to anti-retroviral therapy has increased in the eight ASEAN member States that regularly submit UNGASS\(^2\) and universal access reports. According to the latest data for September 2010, access to treatment in four ASEAN member States has exceeded 60 per cent: Cambodia and Lao People’s Democratic Republic (over 95 per cent); Thailand (76 per cent), and Philippines (60 per cent). Coverage is below 50 per cent of those in need having access to anti-retroviral drugs in Viet Nam (45 per cent), Malaysia (38 per cent) and Indonesia (34 per cent), and Myanmar with only 29 per cent, which is of particular concern. It should be noted that WHO has updated its treatment guidelines in 2010, and at its special session on HIV/AIDS, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS which set targets for a wide range of actions.

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\(^{2}\) At its special session on HIV/AIDS, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS which set targets for a wide range of actions.
2010 which increase the estimated number of people in need by 20 to 60 per cent depending on current coverage and, hence, correspondingly decreases current coverage figures without, however, affecting trends in number of people accessing treatment as outlined above.3

**Tuberculosis**

Tuberculosis (TB) is one of the region’s most serious communicable diseases. Cambodia has the worst situation, with a prevalence in 2008 of 680 per 100,000 people and a death rate of 79 per 100,000 people. Prevalence and death rates are also quite high in other countries, especially Myanmar (470 and 57) and the Philippines (550 and 52). However, TB prevalence and death rates have been coming down across the region, particularly in countries with the worst situation. This is indicated by the slow but steady decline in the Gini indices, reflecting a reduction in disparities within the region over time. One clear sign of convergence is the improvement in detection and treatment rates, with greater availability of the directly observed treatment, short course (DOTS).

**Water and sanitation access**

Improved water and sanitation are critical to the improvement of health. Too many children die of diarrhoea which, in most cases, results from lack of access to clean water and sanitation. In South-East Asia, diarrhoea is responsible for as much as 8.5 per cent of all deaths. ASEAN countries have made much progress towards improving access to safe water supplies, with total access at 86 per cent, compared to 72 per cent in 1990. This is attributed exclusively to achievements in rural access. However, about half of the rural population in Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and 20 per cent or more of the urban population in these two countries and Myanmar still do not have access to safe water supplies. In urban areas, access has been stagnant at 92 per cent, because of rapid urbanization trends, and the resulting water and sanitation conditions in less privileged urban neighbourhoods and slums. Nevertheless, these achievements have been impressive since they occurred in the midst of population growth and rapid urbanization in the ASEAN region.

Levels of access to safe sanitation are lower across the region – 79 per cent in urban areas and 60 per cent in rural areas. In spite of health risks to their families and communities, among the rural population two-thirds or more in Cambodia, more than half in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and more than a third in Indonesia still practice open defecation. The proportion of the urban population in a similar situation is around 20 per cent in Cambodia and Indonesia. Overall though, the Gini indices for access to water and sanitation have become smaller, indicating a convergence in the region.

**Environmental sustainability**

Countries with rapid economic growth show a large decline in environmental quality, diminishing biodiversity, and increasing degradation of land, marine and coastal resources, often leading to increased vulnerability to natural disasters caused by climate variability. The ASEAN contribution to global emissions is relatively small. The region is responsible for about 3.5 per cent of global CO₂ emissions, while its share of the world population is more than double that number (7.7 per cent). However, some ASEAN countries exceed the world average per capita CO₂ emissions by a large margin. In terms of regional disparities, CO₂ emissions per capita differ by over 60 times between the highest and the lowest ASEAN members. In this case, and given ASEAN’s continued high reliance on fossil fuels, convergence is not necessarily good since it implies the least polluting countries are gradually increasing their emissions.

Convergence is more welcome in terms of energy use per $1,000 of GDP (energy intensity) and ASEAN countries seem to be converging on this indicator. Between 1991 and 2006, the median value fluctuated between 200 and 222 kgoe, and the Gini index declined from 30 to 16. It should be noted though that the narrow range within which the median value has moved suggests ASEAN countries may be converging at a sub-optimal level of energy efficiency.4

**Towards the ASEAN Community**

To a large extent, economic convergence among ASEAN countries will depend on the outcome of the policies of individual member States. As noted in Chapter I, ASEAN has attempted, especially in the economic sphere, to create a distinctive ASEAN space – primarily in trade but also, to a lesser extent, in investment and in the movement of workers across the region. The principal document guiding the process of economic integration is the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint, which lists many specific priority actions and policies for four biannual
FIGURE II-6
Intraregional trade of ASEAN and other regional blocs

Intraregional trade as proportion of total trade: 1998-2009

Note: East Asia consists of ASEAN-10 and China, Japan and The Republic of Korea.

FIGURE II-7
ASEAN trade with other developing countries

Intra- and extra-regional exports of goods as share of total exports of goods: 2008

Notes: 1. Developed countries include Australia, Canada, the European Union, Japan, New Zealand, and the United States of America.
2. Shares for Brunei Darussalam are based on 2006 data.
periods between 2008 and 2015 (ASEAN, 2008c). The Blueprint aims at a single market that will offer producers the opportunity to tap common sources of supply and serve larger markets, while providing consumers with a greater variety of goods at lower prices.

ASEAN’s vision of an ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) recognizes that social inequity can undermine economic development (ASEAN, 2004). Among its key features are universal and equitable access to opportunities, upholding norms of social and distributional justice by giving special care to vulnerable groups (such as persons with disabilities, women, youth and children) ensuring people’s health, and protecting the environment to sustain development. According to the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint, the primary goal of the ASCC would be to contribute to realizing an ASEAN Community that is people-centred and socially responsible, to achieve enduring solidarity among ASEAN nations and peoples by forging a common identity and building a caring, sharing and inclusive society (ASEAN, 2009c).

The primary responsibility for social development lies with national governments. But there are also opportunities for concerted regional action. This may include social redistribution mechanisms, such as intraregional monetary transfers and technical cooperation, as well as ASEAN-wide standards for health and labour, and the protection of vulnerable groups. Moreover, regional entities may be in stronger positions than individual governments to negotiate with private providers to ensure access, affordability and quality standards in commercial services and utilities. Other potential areas for regional cooperation include countering drugs and human trafficking, and negotiating with pharmaceutical companies on prices and supplies. ASEAN can also work as a group with donor countries: it has, for example, already received sizeable amounts of Tamiflu and personal protective equipment in preparing for responses to possible outbreaks of avian influenza.

Trade

ASEAN should have a lot to gain from trade integration. Compared to other regional groupings, it is much more dependent on trade. In 2007, the ratio of trade goods and services to GDP was 152 per cent – over three times the ratio for the South Asia Free Trade Agreement and more than twice that for the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement (World Bank, 2008b). However, ASEAN has not been particularly successful at intensifying trade between its own members. Intraregional trade among the ASEAN-10, although growing, represents only around one-quarter of its total trade – much lower than, for example, among the EU-15 or NAFTA countries (Figure II-6).

FIGURE II-8
Decline in tariffs for intra-ASEAN imports

Source: ESCAP calculation based on UNCTAD (2010).
A notable feature of ASEAN nations is that they trade extensively with other developing countries (Figure II-7). Thus, although ASEAN accounts for only 6 per cent of world trade, it contributes close to 18 per cent of the total South-South trade (UNCTAD, 2008). Much of this is with the rest of Asia, notably with China, India and the Republic of Korea – a reflection of ASEAN’s close integration in the production of parts and components for industrial sectors like electronics, automobiles, textiles and clothing. In these circumstances, while greater intra-ASEAN trade might be desirable, strategically, trade with other Asian markets may be more important.

ASEAN’s key instrument for trade integration has been the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA), established with the signing in 1992 of the Agreement on the Common Effective Preferential Tariff Scheme for the ASEAN Free Trade Area. These agreements have been designed typically along ASEAN lines with exclusions that allow for flexibility, even if this permits some free-riding. In 2003, AFTA was supplemented by a protocol to eliminate import duties. The overall impact of this on intra-ASEAN tariffs can be seen in Figure II-8. By 2007, weighted tariffs were less than 2 per cent, though tariffs for the rest of the world were also low at less than 3 per cent. Figure II-9 shows the fall in intra-ASEAN tariffs for various categories of goods, alongside the rising level of imports in the industrial sectors.

While it is not possible to draw any firm conclusions on the relationship between falling intra-ASEAN tariffs and rising imports, it is clear that tariffs no longer present an obstacle to intra-ASEAN trade (Soesastro, 2008). At the same time, ASEAN is not discriminating against goods from the rest of the world: the proportion of ASEAN’s interregional trade remains around 25 per cent on average, so changes in tariffs do not seem to be diverting trade to any great extent. ASEAN’s trade regime is more liberal than in other developing country regional groupings, such as SAARC and MERCOSUR, and it is more on a par with those of developed country blocs like NAFTA and the EU-15. In May 2010, ASEAN member States put into force a single ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA) which consolidates all commitments related to trade in goods and is expected to further reduce trade costs within ASEAN.

ASEAN has now reached a stage where obstacles to greater integration relate more to non-tariff barriers, such as customs formalities and administrative procedures. These are generally more difficult to address since, for the poorer countries especially,
they reflect broader weaknesses in technical, financial and human capacity. Figure II-10 summarizes the situation for a number of trade facilitation indicators. The widest variation across the region is in the time taken for imports and exports, between 5 and 50 days, with a narrower range of 4 to 11 in the number of documents required.

For most of these indicators, Singapore offers the benchmark standard, while Cambodia and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic present the greatest problems. Costs per container, for example, are four to five times greater in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic than in Singapore. The World Bank has compiled a perceptions-based logistics performance index (LPI) and ease of doing business rankings, in which Singapore occupies first place, not just in ASEAN but globally.

ASEAN has also been attempting to liberalize trade in services. Some ASEAN members are leading world exporters of selected services. Singapore, for example, is a major provider of travel, financial, and computer and information services; Thailand and Malaysia of travel and construction services; and Malaysia and the Philippines of communication services. However, on the whole, ASEAN has been a net importer of services.

In the absence of adequate data, some indication of ASEAN’s services trade liberalization may be gauged from commitments under WTO’s General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). On the basis of the World Bank’s ‘GATS commitments index’, ASEAN commitments to liberalize at the multilateral level seem low, although the higher-income countries seem to be somewhat more open than the others.

In December 1995, ASEAN Economic Ministers signed the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS). This is a flexible arrangement that allows two or more countries to agree on concessions without extending them to all ASEAN members. The ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint anticipates that, by 2010, ASEAN countries will have removed almost all restrictions in air travel, health care, tourism, and information and communications technology and by 2015, removed those in logistics. ASEAN countries have also been encouraging the integration of services through mutual recognition.

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**FIGURE II-10**

Non-tariff barriers to further trade integration

*Variation in indicators of trade facilitation among ASEAN member States: 2009 or later*

Source: ESCAP calculation based on World Bank (2009).
agreements (MRAs). MRAs enable the qualification of professional service providers to be mutually recognized by signatory member States, facilitating the easier flow of such services across the ASEAN region. During 2005-2008, ASEAN member States endorsed seven such agreements covering engineering, nursing, architecture, surveying, accountancy, and medicine and dentistry services.

A further trade issue for ASEAN is the extent to which member States unite in engaging with the rest of the world. Since ASEAN is not a customs union, it cannot be a member of WTO as a grouping. Nine ASEAN member States are WTO members and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic is in the process of accession. Member States thus negotiate their individual positions although, at times, they have been able to coordinate their positions and to speak with a single ASEAN voice. However, given the lack of common trade policies and large disparities in economic and industrial development, and trade dependence, ASEAN member States have occasionally chosen to work with other country groupings to try to influence negotiations. Indonesia, for example, belongs to four groupings (Figure II-11) (WTO, 2008).

ASEAN has also been entering into trade agreements, the so-called ASEAN+1 FTAs, with its “Dialogue Partners” that include China, Japan, India, the Republic of Korea, Australia and New Zealand. It has also led the formation of broader forums that include the East Asia Summit (EAS) — the ASEAN-10 and China, Japan, India, the Republic of Korea, Australia and New Zealand — and the ASEAN+3 (ASEAN-10 and China, Japan and the Republic of Korea), both at the Summit level. Both EAS and ASEAN+3 are moving towards broader trade and economic cooperation agreements. ASEAN is also looking beyond its immediate neighbourhood to strengthen trade linkages and cooperation in finance with other regions as, for example, a 2008 agreement for cooperation in economic, development, political and security matters with the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf. Individual ASEAN member States also have bilateral agreements with countries outside the region that add up to a veritable “noodle bowl” of bilateral agreements. In an attempt to consolidate these arrangements, the Blueprint has put forward the principle of “ASEAN centrality” – which implies that when formulating external economic relations, member States should take ASEAN interests into account.

**FIGURE II-11**
ASEAN member States and coalitions in WTO

![Diagram showing ASEAN member States and coalitions in WTO](image-url)

**Note:** WTO Observer

**Source:** Based on WTO (2008).
**Investment**

ASEAN integration could also be accelerated by greater flows of foreign direct investment (FDI) and capital. These are relatively low at present, but on a rising trend. Between 2004 and 2007, before the onset of the global financial and economic crisis which disrupted investment and capital flows, intra-ASEAN FDI rose from $2.8 billion to $9.7 billion – from 9 to 13 per cent of total FDI into the region (Figure II-12). Most of this came from Singapore and Malaysia, and the main destinations were the two countries plus Indonesia and Thailand – intercountry investment that has spurred two-way integration in such industries as food, automobiles and communications equipment.

Intra-ASEAN investments in lower income countries have been encouraged by the preferential access these countries have to ASEAN markets – enabling them to benefit from the economies of scale in a larger market and to specialize according to their comparative advantages. They have a wealth of agricultural, marine and mineral resources which gives them advantages in the production of primary goods, as well as low-cost labour that is attractive for labour-intensive production. Viet Nam offers a large domestic market and the geographic advantage of proximity to China. The apparel industry, for example, has migrated to lower-cost bases in Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Viet Nam for export to other countries. Investments have also flown into these countries for food production, for both local consumption and export.

Most FDI flows into ASEAN countries, however, are from outside the region, especially from other Asian economies which see ASEAN as an integral part of wider Asian production networks. Much of this investment comes from China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China, Taiwan Province of China and the Republic of Korea, and it is destined primarily for Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. But the lower-income countries also benefit. For instance, although the flows in absolute amount might be smaller to Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Viet Nam, than to other countries FDI represents a higher proportion of their GDP in these three countries.

Intra-ASEAN capital flows are hampered by the relative underdevelopment of domestic equity and bond markets in ASEAN countries. Compared to the developed economies, most ASEAN countries, with the exception of Singapore, rely heavily on finance from banks (Figure II-13). Equity markets are often quite shallow and not very open. And while bond markets have been growing rapidly, they are still relatively small, with a limited number of issues and range of maturities, and domestic currency bonds dominated by government issues. The expansion of bond markets has also been stunted by legal and regulatory hurdles, such as lengthy approval times and poor disclosure standards.

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**FIGURE II-12**

Trends in intra-ASEAN foreign direct investment: 2004-2009

![Graph showing trends in intra-ASEAN FDI and its share in total FDI from 2004 to 2009.](image-url)

*Source: ASEAN (2010c).*
For the lower-income countries, these limitations are compounded by financial systems which are generally not well-developed. Banking systems are weak, with poor supervision, and many of the financial institutions are state-owned. Governments also tend to get involved in bank lending decisions and there are many non-performing loans.

Opportunities for financial integration within ASEAN are also constrained by the extent of integration with developed country markets. The richer economies in the region are more likely to invest in Europe or North America – and to engage with them in cross-border lending and borrowing.

ASEAN has made some efforts to spur growth in capital markets. In 1998, in the wake of the Asian financial crisis, it set up the ASEAN surveillance process to spot impending shocks and to ensure early warnings and adequate consultation. ASEAN+3 countries also aim to facilitate the issuance of local currency-denominated bonds under the Asian Bond Market Initiative and have expanded the Chiang Mai Initiative. The East Asia-Pacific Central Banks have also embarked on an Asian Bond Fund Initiative. The region has been promoted as a desirable investment destination by the establishment of the FTSE-ASEAN index and the CIMB-ASEAN Exchange Traded Fund. These and other initiatives should help increase financial integration by improving the regulation of domestic financial systems, opening financial services, and progressively relaxing capital and exchange controls. Cross-border bond and equity portfolio flows have gradually increased over the past decade, with co-movement in equity market returns indicating greater integration in stock markets.

**Development assistance**

Economic integration within ASEAN can also be influenced by flows of development assistance from the more developed to the poorer economies – to invest in both economic infrastructure and human development. Apart from the ethical and moral imperatives for such aid, there are powerful economic reasons since countries that have higher standards of human development will also present stronger and more effective trading partners. The rapid growth in Viet Nam, for example, compared to some other countries, can be attributed in part to investment in education and health.

ASEAN has established a number of instruments to transfer financial resources across its economies. For instance, the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) was launched in 2000 to help narrow the development gap within ASEAN and to assist newer members in the process of regional integration. Close to 200 projects have been completed in the areas of

**FIGURE II-13**

Domestic financing sources for selected ASEAN countries, 2009, 4th quarter

Source: ADB (2010).
infrastructure, human resource development, ICT, economic integration, tourism, and poverty and quality of life. By October 2009, ASEAN-6 member States had contributed over US$ 33 million to the IAI Work Plan, with Singapore accounting for over 70 per cent of the contribution (ASEAN, 2009e).

Another transfer mechanism is the ASEAN Development Fund (ADF). This was established in 2004 to provide financial resources to support implementation of the Vientiane Programme of Action. The ADF is intended to leverage funding for regional cooperation programmes and projects from Dialogue Partners and other external donors by seed-funding large-scale projects that require major funding from a Dialogue Partner or donor institution, as well as provide full funding for small and short-term projects of a strategic nature. Despite its ambitious objectives, the ADF has received only about $1 million so far from Australia, China, India, Malaysia, Singapore and others.

On the whole, ASEAN financial transfer mechanisms are dwarfed by aid from outside ASEAN. In 2008, net international official development assistance (ODA) to Cambodia was $743 million, to the Lao People’s Democratic Republic $496 million, to Myanmar $534 million, and to Viet Nam $2,552 million (OECD, 2010). Much of this was via multilateral programmes, the largest of which involving ASEAN countries is the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Regional Cooperation Programme, supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The programme has financed cross-border communication and transport projects between ASEAN GMS countries and southern parts of China. Other subregional programmes have included the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines-East ASEAN Growth Area, the Ayeyarwady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy and the ASEAN-Mekong Basin Development Cooperation.

An emerging and important type of financial transfer globally is through the Aid-for-Trade mechanism, which reflects increasing attention paid by donors to trade capacity and infrastructure. Between 2002 and 2007, global Aid-for-Trade volumes increased 21 per cent (OECD/WTO, 2009). Both bilateral and multilateral transfers under the mechanism have been important for the newer ASEAN members, Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Viet Nam, as well as for Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines. Such assistance can play an important role in boosting intra-ASEAN trade. For ASEAN, the largest bilateral Aid-for-Trade donor is Japan and the largest multilateral donor is the World Bank.

In the balance, aid flows within ASEAN have been mainly for “soft infrastructure” in capacity building and technical assistance projects, while most of the financing for “hard infrastructure” has come from outside ASEAN. Opportunities to integrate the two ODA flows could be explored using ASEAN as a channel for non-ASEAN funds. This would ensure better alignment with jointly agreed regional priorities. China, for example, provides some support to the IAI and the ADF, but transfers most of its funding to lower-income ASEAN countries on a bilateral basis. It also provides a wide range of economic assistance that includes non-development aid and low-interest loans in such sectors as energy and transport.

**Transport and logistics**

For the past few decades, ASEAN countries have sought to improve all modes of transport. In 2004, ASEAN Transport Ministers adopted the ASEAN Transport Action Plan 2005-2010 to ensure the region’s multimodal transport infrastructure works efficiently on land, water and in the air, with the ultimate goal of facilitating the seamless movement of people and goods. In recent years, ASEAN and ESCAP have cooperated on the development of land transport infrastructure and transport facilitation. The ASEAN Highway Network, for example, takes the Asian Highway Network initiated by ESCAP as its backbone, while ESCAP’s 1995 study on “Trans-Asian Railway Route Requirements: Development of the Trans-Asian Railway in the Indo-China and ASEAN Subregion” provides ASEAN countries with useful references to identify the key railway routes for development.

One of the ASEAN’s flagship transport projects is the Singapore-Kunming Rail Link (SKRL) project, which connects Singapore to Yunnan Province of China. As of now, uninterrupted international rail movements are possible only along a 2,560 km north-south corridor starting in Singapore and terminating in Thannaleng in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, which became rail-connected to Thailand for the first time in 2009. Recently, the concerned governments have given renewed attention to the merits of a subregional rail network and pre-feasibility studies on all the missing links have been completed. In some cases, physical work is in progress. For example, Cambodia’s rail network is undergoing a major upgrade, including preliminary earthwork on constructing the 48 km missing link between Siisophon and Poipet which, once completed, will allow direct cross-border rail operations between Cambodia and Thailand.
The success of the container land bridge launched in 1999 by the railways of Malaysia and Thailand to provide intermodal service between Port Klang in Malaysia and the Lat Krabang ICD (inland container depot) in Thailand underlines the important contribution that efficient rail infrastructure and services could make to intra-ASEAN trade. Lat Krabang ICD and the Cikarang Dry Port in Indonesia are good examples of how dry ports can contribute to the integration and facilitation of trade and transport networks and services.

ASEAN countries have also worked on promoting transport facilitation and border crossing. The ASEAN Framework Agreement on the Facilitation of Goods in Transit, the ASEAN Framework Agreement on the Facilitation of Inter-State Transport and the Agreement on the Recognition of Commercial Vehicle Inspection Certificates for Goods Vehicles and Public Service Vehicles offer a useful basis for ASEAN collaboration. The GMS Agreement, developed under an ADB technical assistance programme, provides a practical approach for the short to medium term to streamline regulations and reduce non-physical barriers among the GMS countries.\(^6\)

ASEAN initiatives to promote multimodal transport centre around the 2005 ASEAN Framework Agreement on Multimodal Transport, which offers shippers the possibility of relying on a single Multimodal Transport Operator (MTO) responsible for the whole transport process. The agreement also defines, among others, multimodal transport documents, liabilities and jurisdiction. Once ratified by ASEAN member States, it will be an important mechanism for implementing multimodal transport in ASEAN region.

The significance of efficient logistics systems has been increasingly recognized by the ASEAN countries because better logistics can provide a substantial boost to trade. For example, it has been estimated that in Cambodia and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, a 20 per cent reduction in logistics costs would increase the trade to GDP ratio by more than 10 per cent (ESCAP, ). However, logistics systems in many ASEAN countries remain underdeveloped and expensive. In Indonesia, for instance, logistics costs amount to 14 per cent of total production costs, compared to 5 per cent in Japan (JETRO, 2007). In Thailand, logistics costs in 2007 ran as high as 18.9 per cent of GDP\(^7\).

The “enabling trade index” (ETI) produced by the World Economic Forum can put the status of ASEAN logistics into a global context. The ETI consists of both perceptive and objective measures in four areas: market access, border administration, transport and communications infrastructure, and the business environment. A higher value of ETI, up to 7, indicates better performance. Singapore ranks high on the overall index – 1st in the world in 2010, followed by Malaysia (30\(^\text{th}\)), Thailand (60\(^\text{th}\)), Indonesia (68\(^\text{th}\)), Viet Nam (71\(^\text{st}\)), the Philippines (92\(^\text{nd}\)) and Cambodia (102\(^\text{nd}\)).

Another perspective on logistics comes from the World Bank’s logistics performance index (LPI), in which a higher value, up to 5, indicates better performance (Table II-2). Similar to ETI, the LPI consists of both perceptive and objective measures and has three parts: perceptions of trading partners on each country’s logistics environment, information on the logistics environment, and real time-cost performance data. On this index, Singapore is ranked second in the world, and the weakest ASEAN performers are Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Myanmar.

ASEAN has established guidelines to encourage logistics development. Proposed measures under the ASEAN Roadmap for the Integration of Logistics Services include liberalizing logistics services and enhancing the capacity and competitiveness of service providers. This will require the involvement of stakeholders from the public and private sectors, including governments, customs and freight forwarders.

The opportunities for cooperation in transport integration across ASEAN have increased with the creation of several forums and institutions. These include: the ASEAN Airlines Meeting, the Annual Meeting of Chief Executives of ASEAN Railways, the ASEAN Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations, the ASEAN Ports Association, the Federation of ASEAN Shippers Councils and the ESCAP annual meetings of freight forwarders, multimodal transport operators and logistics service providers. These are useful platforms for the industry to share knowledge and promote effective dialogue between industry and policy makers.

**Energy**

Energy is a universal pre-requisite for social and economic development. However, the mere presence of energy resources in a country is not an assurance of its development. Modern energy — electricity, fossil fuels and renewable energy options — requires an array of capital-intensive conversion technologies to become useful in economic and social activities, something that many resource-rich countries lack. This, and the fact of energy resources and centres of

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6 The GMS Agreement is formally known as The Agreement between and among the Governments of the Kingdom of Cambodia, the People’s Republic of China, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, the Union of Myanmar, the Kingdom of Thailand, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam for Facilitation of Cross-Border Transport of Goods and People.

TABLE II-1
Enabling trade index for ASEAN countries, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Market access</th>
<th>Border administration</th>
<th>Transport and communications infrastructure</th>
<th>Business environment</th>
<th>Overall index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Rank</td>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Rank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>116</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>85</td>
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<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>64</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.56</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Thailand</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Nam</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data not available for Brunei Darussalam, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Myanmar.

TABLE II-2
Logistics performance index, for ASEAN countries, 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Customs</th>
<th>Infrastructure</th>
<th>Inter-national shipments</th>
<th>Logistics competence</th>
<th>Tracking &amp; tracing</th>
<th>Timeliness</th>
<th>LPI</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>2.37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>118</td>
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<td>Malaysia</td>
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<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
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<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>1.92</td>
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<td>2.01</td>
<td>2.36</td>
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<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4.02</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Nam</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data not available for Brunei Darussalam.

Energy consumption being unevenly distributed across countries, makes energy an ideal candidate for cooperation in trade, investment, technology, infrastructure and related areas.

ASEAN member countries are particularly well-endowed in energy resources, with eight of the 10 having proven oil and gas reserves. ASEAN as a whole contributes to about 40 per cent of the oil and gas reserves of the Asia-Pacific region (Matassan, 2007). Almost all countries also have substantial hydropower resources, with Indonesia and the Philippines enjoying geothermal resources as well.

However, these resources are unevenly distributed across the ASEAN region (Figure II-14) and the major energy-consuming centres are not necessarily where the resources are. For example, Singapore, a major energy consumer and the most developed among ASEAN countries, has no fossil fuel reserves
or hydropower capacity of any significance. On the other hand, Cambodia and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic have substantial hydropower potential but without the consuming capacity. Furthermore, in spite of ASEAN’s rapid energy demand growth, per capita energy consumption in the region is relatively low, at around one-fifth of the OECD average in 2007, which implies future demand for energy will continue to rise rapidly. This is particularly true of countries like Myanmar where access to modern energy was just 5 per cent in 2002, compared to 100 per cent in Singapore (Nicolas, 2009).

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), primary energy demand in ASEAN is projected to increase from 513 million Mtoe in 2007 to 903 Mtoe in 2030, an average growth rate of 2.5 per cent per annum (IEA, 2009). ASEAN’s share of global primary producer in the region, lost its net exporter status in 2004 and Malaysia is expected follow suit by 2014. Energy security — especially oil security — concerns energy demand is estimated to rise from 4.3 to 5.4 per cent in the same period. These numbers are oil have thus become quite acute for ASEAN, with major shifts taking place towards gas, coal and hydropower. Climate change pressures have added to these concerns, prompting ASEAN countries to step up policy emphasis on energy efficiency and renewable energy, as well as on nuclear energy. Interconnecting energy-producing member countries with energy-consuming ones is now a high priority for ASEAN to ensure its continued development.

ASEAN is currently pursuing this under the ASEAN Plan of Action on Energy Cooperation (APAEC), which has seven programme areas: the ASEAN power grid; trans-ASEAN gas pipelines; coal and clean coal technology; energy efficiency and conservation; renewable energy; regional energy policy and planning; and civilian nuclear energy. Some programme areas are quite active with a high involvement of various stakeholders, including the private sector, while others are making slow progress since they lack the necessary finance and/or the required policy push. The APAEC framework contains extensive interconnection plans for electricity, natural gas and oil (Figures II-15 & II-16).

**FIGURE II-14**
Energy resource endowments in ASEAN member countries

The ASEAN Power Grid envisages 14 interconnection projects, of which four have been completed so far: Malaysia-Singapore, Thailand-Malaysia, Viet Nam-Cambodia, and Thailand-Cambodia. Seven others are expected to be completed by 2020 and they involve the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar and the Philippines, in addition to countries featuring in the completed projects. The Trans-ASEAN Gas Pipeline includes the Malaysia-Singapore pipeline, which was completed in 1991, ahead of the APAEC Action Plan. Since then, seven other cross-border pipelines have been completed: Myanmar-Thailand (two pipelines); Indonesia-Malaysia; Indonesia-Singapore (two pipelines); Malaysia-Thailand; and Singapore-Malaysia. Several more projects are being designed or are under consideration. (Nicolas, 2009)

Beyond electricity and petroleum fuels, energy sector integration efforts in ASEAN remain at the “soft cooperation” (discussions, information exchange) stage rather than serious action towards physical infrastructure connections. The ASEAN Forum on Coal (AFOC), established in 2000, has focused on facilitating dialogue among coal players in the region to promote intra-ASEAN business opportunities. Nuclear energy cooperation was first discussed among ASEAN Energy Ministers at the 25th ASEAN Summit in 2007 where they agreed on establishing an ASEAN Nuclear Energy Safety Sub-Sector Network. The current focus is on public information on nuclear energy for power generation; capacity-building; regulatory framework, including nuclear energy regulators network; emergency preparedness and response plans; and cooperation in promotion, project development and R&D.

In March 2009, the revised ASEAN Petroleum Security Agreement (APSA) and its Annex, the Co-ordinated Emergency Response Measures (CERM), were signed. The revised APSA seeks to provide for both short-term crisis response and for medium- and longer-term policy coordination, including diversification of the energy mix, diversification of sources for each fuel and stimulation of energy sector investment, including in renewable energy, energy conservation and oil stockpiling. The highlight of the 2009 APSA was a crisis response mechanism called the Mechanism for the Operationalization of the Co-ordinated Emergency Response Measures under which net oil exporting member countries are expected to supply petroleum products to countries in need at discounted prices in case of a shortage, and, in turn, net oil importers are expected to purchase these products from suppliers in case of an oversupply.

Given the diversity in energy resources and technologies, and the lead time to complete infrastructure-heavy interconnection projects, ASEAN integration in energy will be a complex and extended process. At the same time, ASEAN has a number of natural advantages that other regions in the Asia-Pacific lack — relative abundance of both fossil and non-fossil energy resources; member States like Singapore and Thailand with developed manufacturing bases; ongoing complementary infrastructure interconnection projects in transport and telecommunication; and strengthening finance sector cooperation, essential for capital-intensive energy sector projects. The trend is clearly towards integration, though not necessarily towards convergence due to the large socio-economic disparities among ASEAN member countries. New directions should include cooperation in renewable energy and energy efficiency through technology innovation, manufacturing capacity development, technology transfer and trade; and the coordinated setting of standards and specifications.

ASEAN could also play an important role in extending South-South cooperation to other subregional organizations in South Asia, Central and North-East Asia, and the Pacific. Strengthening the interconnections with these subregions would contribute to the development of a broader and a more stable market for energy suppliers, consumers and transit countries.

**International migration**

One of the most evident forms of integration between ASEAN economies is the growing flow of migrant labour. Most of the region’s labour migrants come...
from other ASEAN countries. The main sources are Indonesia and Myanmar, followed by Cambodia and Viet Nam, while the main destinations are Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. In Malaysia, around 75 per cent of an estimated 1.9 million foreign workers are from other ASEAN countries, particularly Indonesia which supplies around 60 per cent of foreign workers in Peninsular Malaysia and more than 90 per cent of those in Sabah (Kanapathy, 2004). Thailand has around 1.8 million migrant workers, 75 per cent from Myanmar, with most of the rest from Cambodia and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Martin, 2007). In Brunei Darussalam and Singapore, about 30 per cent of the labour migrants are from ASEAN countries. In addition, countries like Malaysia and Thailand are both sources and destinations. Only the Philippines, which is one of the world’s largest sources of migrant workers, sends most of them to countries outside of the ASEAN region, mainly to Hong Kong Special Administrative Region China, Taiwan Province of China, and the Republic of Korea.

Migrants typically move for employment at higher wages. But there are also strong demographic factors at play: while destination countries, such as Singapore and Thailand, have ageing populations and a shortage of younger workers, the source countries typically have younger populations and suffer from high levels of youth unemployment. Added to this are social and cultural factors, since as countries develop economically their educated young people are increasingly reluctant to do the “dirty dangerous or difficult” work in factories or construction and prefer to leave these jobs to immigrants (Ducanes and Abella, 2008).

The majority of intra-ASEAN migrants is unskilled. While there is some skilled-worker migration from the Philippines and from Malaysia to other ASEAN countries, most migrants are unskilled manual workers – travelling from Myanmar to construction sites in Thailand, for example, or from Indonesia to plantations in Malaysia.

An increasing number of migrants are women who constitute the majority of official labour outflows – from Indonesia, 83 per cent, and from the Philippines, 60 per cent. If irregular migrants are factored in, the feminization of migration would involve more countries, such as Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Viet Nam (World Bank, 2006). Demand for women migrant workers has been persistent in the fast-growing economies of South-East Asia, often to care for the children of local women who are drawn into the labour force and to look after senior citizens in an ageing population.

Source: ASEAN Centre for Energy (2010).
While a significant number of women migrants find jobs as professionals, most are concentrated in domestic work, manufacturing, care services, entertainment and sales. In 2007, about 45 per cent of outgoing Filipinas worked as domestic workers, caregivers and nurses (Philippines, 2007). About 90 per cent of Indonesian overseas women migrants are employed as domestic workers (World Bank, 2006).

Migrant workers in ASEAN face multiple vulnerabilities and gender discrimination at all stages of the migration process. Due to the nature of their work or their irregular status, many migrants have limited access to legal and social protection, including access to sexual and reproductive health services that would also provide information and health care related to HIV/AIDS. Women migrants often find themselves employed in low-status jobs, which provide only minimum prospects for socio-economic mobility. Moreover, they are in a particularly weak position because the types of work that they tend to do, such as domestic work which is usually not covered by a labour code. Women domestic workers are vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse (Human Rights Watch, 2005). In addition, despite the economic and social benefits of remittances, women’s migration often has negative consequences for families left behind, especially in terms of parenting and care-giving issues involving children and older dependants.

Most unskilled migrants travel through irregular channels – often across long and porous borders to neighbouring countries. A large number of labour migrants from Myanmar to Thailand and from Indonesia to Malaysia are estimated to work in irregular status. Thailand and Malaysia have made efforts to regularize their large populations of unskilled foreign workers and have memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with neighbouring countries. For example, Thailand has MoUs with Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Myanmar. But even when a legal option is available, many migrants still prefer irregular channels, since these are quicker and cheaper.

Migration has made an important contribution to ASEAN economies. Foreign workers help sustain construction, manufacturing and many service industries, enabling some businesses to run around the clock. Moreover, the availability of foreign domestic workers has enabled more women to join the workforce.

For skilled migration, one of the major barriers is the lack of a common set of professional standards. The varying quality of tertiary and professional degrees makes it difficult to ensure international recognition of professional education and training certification. The area with the greatest potential for such a joint effort could be the medical sector.

In its Economic Blueprint, ASEAN foresees a free flow of skilled labour by 2020 and is working to “facilitate the issuance of visas and employment passes for ASEAN professionals and skilled labour who are engaged in cross-border trade and investment related activities”. The ASEAN MRAs for nurses, dental and medical practitioners, engineering and architectural services, surveying professionals and accountancy services are a first step towards facilitating the movement of skilled labour.

While mutual recognition of academic degrees will help intra-ASEAN migration, language barriers will likely persist. In many cases, the common language is English. In Singapore, for example, migrants from the Philippines and Myanmar find it easier to obtain employment than those from Indonesia and Thailand who often lack English language skills (Manning and Sidorenko, 2007). At the same time, nurses moving to Thailand are required by the Government to speak Thai.

ASEAN has already committed itself to an ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers. This acknowledges the “need to adopt appropriate and comprehensive migration policies on migrant workers” and “to address cases of abuse and violence” (ASEAN, 2007a). An important task of the ASEAN Committee established in July 2007 for effectively implementing the Declaration (ASEAN, 2007c) is to develop an ASEAN legal instrument for the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers (Chalermpalanupap, 2008a). One of the first steps could be to define minimum wages and maximum working hours for migrant workers – which would not only protect migrants, but also the nationals of the country, since migrants are often associated with decreased wages and labour standards. The Philippines, for instance, has already passed a regulation to place domestic workers abroad only when they receive a monthly minimum wage of $400. However, such a unilateral regulation can only be effective if other countries – countries of origin and of destination – similarly commit to it. Agreed working standards regulating wages and working hours for domestic helpers within ASEAN could enhance the implementation of ASEAN’s social agenda.

The difficulty with providing social protection for migrants lies in the fact that a large number of migrants are not registered and therefore not covered by the labour code – or work in areas of the economy
where even national workers have little security. Protecting migrant workers is an issue that has to be tackled at a regional level, since it affects both the country of origin and the country of destination. In order to make self-commitments to labour standards for migrant workers effective, all ASEAN countries have to commit to these standards. Steps have been taken in this direction.

In May 2010, the ASEAN Labour Ministers’ action plan for the 2010-2015 period was approved at the 21st ASEAN Labour Ministers’ Meeting held in Hanoi. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to support the implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, including through a policy repository on migrant workers, the sharing of best practices in eliminating recruitment malpractices, and the development of an ASEAN instrument on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ASEAN, 2010).

**Gender equality**

Despite some progress in key areas, the achievement of gender equality and women’s empowerment in the ASEAN region continues to face persistent barriers. While the region has established itself as an economic powerhouse and experienced rapid economic growth, inequalities have grown in many countries and women have disproportionate representation among the poor.

The advancement of women can be partly measured by gender equality indicators, such as the male to female ratios in primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment, or their participation in paid employment or political and other decision-making positions. Prevalence of various forms of violence against women is an indicator of unequal power relations. High maternal mortality is also an indicator of women’s access to the health care system, and of persistent discrimination and unequal status in society.

The situation of women in the ASEAN region is well-documented in the ASEAN Secretariat’s Third Report on the Advancement of Women in ASEAN in 2007 (ASEAN, 2007b). All ASEAN countries have achieved gender equality in primary enrolment, and there have been major achievements in secondary education, although some countries are still lagging behind in female enrolment at the secondary and tertiary levels. However, advances in education for girls and women have not necessarily been translated into greater economic opportunities. Throughout the ASEAN region, women’s participation in employment is only half to two-thirds that of men. Women are also likely to earn less – in Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, women’s wages in manufacturing are on average two-thirds those of men although women tend to do the most tedious, repetitive jobs. In agriculture, women suffer discrimination since land titles are usually held in the names of husbands or sons, which also reduces women’s access to credit.

High maternal mortality remains a serious concern in a number of countries, such as Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Myanmar. In several countries, there are considerable differences in women’s access to health care between urban and rural areas. Furthermore, women have less influence in the political sphere: in most countries, they occupy less than 20 per cent of parliamentary positions. Across the region, women are also subjected to disturbing levels of sexual, physical and other forms of violence, as well as harmful traditional and customary practices.

As early as 1988, ASEAN committed to enhancing the advancement of women through the Declaration of the Advancement of Women in the ASEAN Region (ASEAN, 1988), which recognized “the importance of active participation and integration of women in the region in sharing the future development and progress of ASEAN and the necessity of meeting the needs and aspiration of women in the ASEAN Member Countries”. Since then, ASEAN has been monitoring the implementation of the 1988 Declaration and published three reports on the advancement of women. In 2004, for the first time, all 10 ASEAN member States committed to fighting violence against women at the regional level – ASEAN Foreign Ministers adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the ASEAN Region. ASEAN member States also adopted the Declaration Against Trafficking in Persons, particularly Women and Children in 2004.

In 2009, ASEAN countries, at the Asia-Pacific High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to Review Regional Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and Its Regional and Global Outcomes, reaffirmed their commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action by adopting the Bangkok Declaration for Beijing +15 which states that “gender equality and the promotion and protection of the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all are essential to advance development, peace and security.” (ESCAP, 2010)

In April 2010, the ASEAN Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) was inaugurated in Hanoi as a result of the Vientiane Action Programme (ASEAN,
The ACWC has the mandate to promote and protect the rights of women and children in the ASEAN region. The first official meeting of the ACWC is scheduled to take place in Jakarta towards the end of 2010.

Inclusion of persons with disabilities

The situation of persons with disabilities is an indicator of the level of social inclusion and progress. According to United Nations estimates, around 10 per cent of the global population have a disability; this would mean that the ASEAN region has around 58 million persons with disabilities. Responses to a 2006 ESCAP questionnaire from nine ASEAN member States indicated that the proportion of persons with disabilities ranged from 1 per cent in Malaysia to 8 per cent in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (ESCAP, 2008c). However, wide differences in definitions and methods of data collection make it difficult to assemble reliable and comparable data.

Persons with disabilities and their families are disproportionately poor, and persons with disabilities have low access to educational and employment opportunities. In Viet Nam, poor families with disabled members constituted 33 per cent of the total number of families with disabled members in 2005. Indonesia reported that only 5 per cent of children with disabilities had completed primary school. In Viet Nam, only 15 per cent of persons with disabilities of working age had jobs with sustainable income (ESCAP, 2006b).

Over the past two decades, ASEAN countries have made efforts to improve opportunities for the participation of persons with disabilities in the development process. These have yielded advancements in entitlements and in access for persons with disabilities to the physical environment, transportation, and information and communications.

ASEAN member States, such as the Philippines, have long been at the forefront of championing the rights of persons with disabilities, actively supporting the first and second Asian and Pacific Decades of Disabled Persons (ESCAP, 2002). ASEAN plans on social welfare envisage an inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society for persons with disabilities (ASEAN, 2007c and 2007d). The Vientiane Action Programme (2004-2010) recommends that ASEAN develop a standardized set of data on disability and the ASEAN Strategic Framework and Plan of Action for Social Welfare, Family and Children (2007-2010) reiterates the need for regional cooperation on disability issues. In 2007, two ministerial meetings on social welfare and development (ASEAN, 2007d and 2007e) confirmed the importance of inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based societies for persons with disabilities – and to improving their standard of living, removing various barriers, and ensuring their effective participation in society, as well as preventing the causes of impairment, such as work-related injuries and vulnerability to natural disasters. The Ministers also recommended that the disability perspective should be “an integral dimension of policies and regulations in all spheres of ASEAN society to ensure that all those living with disabilities are given equal opportunity and access to the employment market”.

One of the most significant advancements for disability rights, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, became effective in 2008. It underscores persons with disabilities as holders of rights and agents of development, not objects of charity. The Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand have ratified the Convention, and Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia and Viet Nam have signed it (United Nations, 2010c). To comply with the Convention, Thailand, for example, has revised its constitution and introduced comprehensive legislation prohibiting discrimination on grounds of disability.

In October 2009, the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) was launched to promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the peoples of ASEAN (ASEAN, 2009b). ASEAN could lead the promotion and implementation of the Convention by integrating disability concerns into mandated functions of this nature.

While seven ASEAN member States have reported that they have accessibility codes or regulations (ESCAP, 2007b), they have tended to focus on wheelchair users with rather weak enforcement. Singapore is noteworthy as it has involved experts with disabilities in revising its building code and in significantly improving the accessibility of its built environment, benefiting not only persons with disabilities but also senior citizens, as well as families with small children and older tourists. At the ASEAN level, one useful measure would be to remove tariffs on devices or vehicles for persons with disabilities.

Strengthening the pillars

The imperatives for ASEAN to accelerate the pace of its integration have become more pressing now as the region tries to pull itself up from the sudden steep plunge in its economic fortunes during the worst of
the 2008 global financial and economic crisis. With its high reliance on external trade, foreign investment, and capital and technology inflows, ASEAN is especially vulnerable to global turbulences. As noted by ESCAP's Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2010: Sustaining Recovery and Dynamism for Inclusive Development (ESCAP, 2010), the world economy's recovery remains fragile. Aftershocks of the crisis — rising trade protectionism, sovereign debt risks in the EU countries and, most recently, fears of a currency war — continue to rock the nascent beginnings of a more stable, sustainable and inclusive model of socio-economic development.

On the brighter side, Asia and the Pacific leads the recovery process. Regional leaders have acknowledged a strategy of exploiting the potential of regional economic cooperation and integration is the key to future growth and stability. For ASEAN, this means achieving its integration faster than envisioned and, beyond that, forging stronger linkages with the rest of the Asia-Pacific region. For instance, there are now two overlapping proposals — the East Asia Free Trade Agreement (EAFTA), which brings together the ASEAN+3, and the Comprehensive Economic Partnership of East Asia (CEPEA), which brings the ASEAN+3 together with Australia, India and New Zealand (ASEAN+6). Accelerating progress on these proposals can serve as the stepping stone to a broader, unified Asia-Pacific market and economic community. ASEAN is not lacking in strategic frameworks and plans on socio-cultural integration either, even if there are issues that require further attention. Speeding up the implementation of even the existing agreements can shorten its distance to an ASEAN Community.

ASEAN has clearly made progress with regional integration on several fronts. While the pace of this progress has varied between different areas, efforts to overcome the many difficulties continue. The analysis in this chapter is not intended as a critique. Rather, the aim has been to help ASEAN prioritize its future plans of action, with attention to those areas that would be most critical in hastening or hindering the establishment of the three pillars of the ASEAN Community. In some areas, the gaps identified relate to problems that have persisted for long years, in part due to the complexity of solutions and in part due to their being overtaken by other issues that have captured the attention of ASEAN member States. In other areas, the gaps have more to do with a visionary future in which ASEAN could blaze the trail for others, not only in Asia and the Pacific, but also across the world.

Judging by the statements of ASEAN Leaders at their recent summits, they are quite aware of the task ahead and are not shy about seeking assistance from other organizations that have the capacity, experience and resources that ASEAN may lack. The United Nations, with its long history of association with ASEAN, has partnered with it across the spectrum of development frontiers. As in the past, it stands ready to support the ASEAN quest in the future. The modes and areas of cooperation are the focus of the next and concluding chapter.
CHAPTER III
STRIVING TOGETHER: ASEAN AND THE UNITED NATIONS

As ASEAN moves towards deeper integration to reduce economic and social disparities among its member States, the United Nations system stands ready to support it. This chapter outlines the extent of cooperation achieved so far between the two and the potential for strengthening it in the future as ASEAN moves into a new, more ambitious phase of its development.

Almost from its inception, ASEAN has worked with the United Nations. In 1977, it welcomed the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as a ‘dialogue partner’ (ASEAN, 2008e). At that time, UNDP was the only multilateral aid organization to be accorded that status. In the 1980s and the early 1990s, ASEAN also worked very closely with the United Nations on Cambodia and the related issue of Indo-Chinese asylum seekers – cooperation that was to prove critical in the resolution of these issues (Severino, 2006). From the 1990s into the early years of the 21st century, ASEAN and the United Nations worked together on conflict prevention and resolution, and peace-building.

Currently, ASEAN’s main point of coordination with the United Nations system is the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) — both in its capacity as Chair of the UN’s Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) and as the regional development arm of the United Nations.

In October 2009, as an indication of the ASEAN-United Nations partnership coming of age, the ESCAP Executive Secretary became the first United Nations official to be invited to speak at the 4th East Asia Summit (EAS) in Cha-am Hua Hin, Thailand. The Summit brought together the Leaders of the 10 ASEAN member States, and of Australia, China, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea and New Zealand. Her presentation at the Summit on ASEAN regional connectivity resulted in ESCAP being requested to support the ASEAN High Level Task Force set up by ASEAN Leaders at the 15th ASEAN Summit to develop the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity. In response, ESCAP formed a joint work team with ADB which is currently working with the High Level Task Force.

ASEAN is now seeking deeper regional integration by adopting a new Charter that looks beyond mutual security to an ASEAN Community built on three pillars of cooperation — political and security, economic, and socio-cultural. This will be a challenging task. As noted in the preceding chapters, the ten countries that make up ASEAN often have rather different circumstances. Some have resilient and outward-looking economic and social structures that should serve them well as the global economy struggles to adjust to a new and more turbulent era. Others are in a much weaker position and will rely on the support of their fellow member States if they are to engage constructively in a more testing environment.

ASEAN is capable of attaining its potential as a strong and productive community of nations. This will mean exploring new routes and channels that fit its distinctive regional characteristics and circumstances. In doing so, it should be able to draw on other valuable resources, particularly those of the United Nations family which has a wealth of experiences spanning the global, regional and national levels in many of the difficult issues that ASEAN has to address.

From summit to summit

ASEAN held its first joint summit with the United Nations in 2000 in Bangkok. ASEAN Leaders and the then Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, discussed peace and security, human resources development, and the future role of the United Nations in South-East Asia – along with South-South cooperation, especially between ASEAN and African countries.

The second ASEAN-United Nations Summit was held in 2005 in New York. Both organizations recognized
the need to broaden their cooperation and increase the involvement of the specialized United Nations agencies in key issues related to development, in particular poverty eradication and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, prevention and control of infectious diseases, disaster management, transnational issues, trade and investment, and peace and security.

Following these summits, the United Nations General Assembly adopted four resolutions that underscored a strengthening of ASEAN-United Nations cooperation. In its resolution 61/44, the General Assembly decided to invite ASEAN to participate in its sessions as an observer. Subsequently, the ASEAN Foreign Ministers, at their meeting in 2007 in Siem Reap, Cambodia, accorded the United Nations full dialogue partner status.

The Secretaries-General of ASEAN and the United Nations signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in September 2007, committing their organizations to working together to promote regional peace and stability, and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MoU provides for regular consultation on matters of strategic importance. Secretary-General of the United Nations later met with ASEAN Foreign Ministers and the Secretary-General of ASEAN in September 2008 on the sidelines of the High-Level Event on the Millennium Development Goals, the occasion resulting in a joint pledge to further intensify ASEAN-United Nations cooperation.

The third ASEAN-United Nations Summit thus presents an opportunity to reflect on the road traversed thus far and to lend a new impetus to the partnership. The way in which the priorities of the two organizations are closely matched is illustrated in Figure III-1, which shows how the three pillars of the ASEAN Community correspond to those of the United Nations. This allows for extensive synergies and mutual support in achieving the shared goals of what the Chair of the 13th ASEAN Summit in 2007 referred to as “a region of lasting peace, stability, sustained economic growth, shared prosperity and social progress”.

As ASEAN moves into a new phase of its development, it is looking for different ways of engaging its member States in building all three pillars of the ASEAN Community. This will prove easier with some member States than with others. The real test is how far ASEAN can succeed in the most difficult circumstances – on issues that have so far remained outside the reach of conventional strategies and approaches. This is where closer cooperation with the United Nations can be of particular value – combining ASEAN’s capacity to build trust between neighbours with the UN’s experience in promoting economic and social development that is firmly grounded in universal principles and values.
The United Nations Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism

Future cooperation between ASEAN and the United Nations can capitalize on the latter’s Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM). The RCM was established in 19989 by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).10 Its potential contribution to ASEAN-United Nations relations is reinforced by the United Nations General Assembly’s call to further strengthen cooperation and coordination among United Nations specialized agencies, regional commissions, and funds and programmes through more collaborative approaches and improved mechanisms for access by member States to the technical capacities of the United Nations system at the regional and subregional levels. The mechanism aims to increase collaboration among United Nations regional entities and their development partners in addressing regional development issues to ensure the United Nations ‘delivers as one’.

The Asia-Pacific RCM consists of 30 United Nations and affiliated entities and is chaired by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP, the highest ranking United Nations official in Asia-Pacific. It is chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations when he visits the regional commission. ESCAP, as the regional arm of the United Nations with 62 members and associate members, functions as its Secretariat. The Asia-Pacific RCM’s activities are organized under six thematic working groups on education for all, environment and disaster risk management, health, poverty and hunger, international migration and human trafficking, and gender equality and empowerment of women.

In June 2008, ESCAP carried out a mapping study of the Asia-Pacific RCM’s activities and noted two emerging trends. First, RCM entities were tending to focus more on their core mandates and areas of comparative advantage. Second, they were being selective in their areas of collaboration so as to maximize the value added and to enhance the United Nations’ regional level impact. Drawing from these findings, the Executive Secretary of ESCAP, together with RCM members, identified three broad areas in which the RCM can work effectively:

a. joint advocacy, including on the MDGs;

b. power to convene in areas of high-level policy concerns, as well as cross-cutting or transboundary issues, such as climate change or water access; and

c. joint reporting, based on the analytical capabilities of individual RCM entities.

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9 ECOSOC resolution 1998/46.
10 ECOSOC is the UN’s principal organ to coordinate economic, social and related work of specialized United Nations agencies, regional commissions, functional commissions, and funds and programmes (ECOSOC, 2010).
By enhancing United Nations system-wide policy coherence at the regional and subregional levels, the Asia-Pacific RCM can assist ASEAN’s South-South cooperation initiatives and strengthen its North-South linkages through ‘triangular cooperation’ – joint activities among two or more developing countries supported by Northern donors or international organizations. As its Secretariat, ESCAP, together with RCM members, can facilitate the coordinated regional-level follow-up of existing MoUs between ASEAN and RCM entities in areas of priority concern for the ASEAN Secretariat, such as disaster management and regional connectivity. ESCAP also proposes to consult with the ASEAN Secretariat on the existing ASEAN-ESCAP MoU, signed in January 2002, to sharpen its focus and bring it more in line with the changing requirements of the new phase of the partnership.

Potential areas of cooperation between ASEAN and the United Nations can span a very broad range. The following parts of this chapter highlight past and ongoing United Nations system initiatives for the benefit of ASEAN, and indicate selected opportunities to widen the scope of future cooperation. The overarching theme of the partnership is to contribute to the provision of regional public goods that are central to achieving the goal of an ASEAN Community. Regional public goods are those the consumption of which by one state does not prevent consumption by another. They include, for example, trade and financial stability, emergency preparedness, and prevention of the spread of infectious diseases (Box III-1 & Figure III-2).

**Crisis response: Cyclone Nargis**

While cooperation between ASEAN and the United Nations is built on the foundation of their respective charters and shared development priorities, the partnership has proven capable of responding to unforeseen crises, such as the humanitarian crisis brought about by Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar in May 2008. The appalling loss of life, dislocation of millions and wanton destruction caused by the tropical storm (Box III-2) impelled the two organizations to mount a joint rapid response that led to the formation of a unique Tripartite Core Group (TCG) with the Government of Myanmar. The TCG proved vital to expediting the flow of international aid to people in desperate need and in enabling the Government to move on quickly to begin reconstruction.

The ASEAN-United Nations partnership in this instance capitalized on the particular strengths of the two organizations. The comparative advantage of the United Nations in responding to a crisis lies in (a) its principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and independence; (b) its technical capabilities reinforced by lesson learnt from across the world, and (c) its ability to mobilize support from various quarters at the global, regional and national levels.
Cyclone Nargis was the deadliest recorded cyclone in the North Indian Ocean Basin and the second deadliest named tropical storm of all times. The tropical storm changed the lives of nearly 2.4 million people. On 2 and 3 May 2008, winds gusted up to 200 kilometres per hour, ravaging entire fishing and farming communities. The death toll was staggering. Nearly 140,000 people were killed or unaccounted for, and one third of the population of Ayeyarwady and Yangon Divisions was affected. The physical devastation of Nargis was enormous. It flattened 700,000 homes and 75 per cent of the hospitals and clinics in the Delta, severed power lines, disrupted communication systems, massacred three-quarters of the livestock, and destroyed half the fishing fleet. Seawater ruined at least a million acres of rice paddy. The destruction was most severe in the Delta region, the country’s “rice bowl,” where extreme winds, combined with a three-to-four-metre storm surge, inundated broad areas of the fertile land and submerged whole villages. (ASEAN, 2010b)

On its part, ASEAN, as a regional grouping, was able to “get around a lot of suspicion and sensitivities and mistrust”, according to its Secretary-General, to address its “utmost concern for the…victims of Cyclone Nargis who were awaiting assistance in all forms” (ASEAN, 2008d).

The result was an unprecedented tripartite collaboration between the UN, a regional grouping and a member State, all working together to reach a politically acceptable response (Box III-3) to a catastrophe that few countries can cope with on their own. This eased the entry of relief supplies and aid workers, helped prevent the spread of starvation and disease, and saved lives.

The joint ASEAN-United Nations engagement with the Government of Myanmar opened up new spaces for cooperation, such as the ESCAP-ASEAN High Level Experts Group Meeting on Post-Nargis Recovery and Livelihood Opportunities in Myanmar in October 2008. At the request of the Government and UNCT, ESCAP provided technical training in statistics for the Post-Nargis Joint Assessment (PONJA) and supported periodic reviews of the priority action plan. At the national level, the United Nations Country Team led by the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator supported the recovery process under the Post Nargis Recovery and Preparedness Plan (PONREPP) through projects at the local level. These projects and related operations on the ground were carried out by a large number of concerned non-governmental and community-based organizations and self-reliant groups in the affected areas.

Five months after Cyclone Nargis, Secretary-General of the United Nations and his Group of Friends on Myanmar praised the ASEAN-led humanitarian operations – thanking the Secretary-General of ASEAN for his leadership and support. The High Representative of the European Union pointed out that the humanitarian operations had created a crucial window of opportunity for the international community to work with ASEAN and Myanmar – a window that should be kept open for the long-term benefit of Myanmar’s people. In his statement to the 64th United Nations General Assembly in September 2009, the Prime Minister of Myanmar acknowledged the TCG as an exemplary mechanism for future disaster relief and rehabilitation.

Towards a common market

ASEAN is aiming to establish an effective Economic Community in the form of a common market by 2015. According to the Economic Community Blueprint, this will transform ASEAN “into a region with free movement of goods, services, investment, skilled labour, and freer flow of capital” (ASEAN, 2008c). Several United Nations and related agencies can work with ASEAN towards this objective, including the Asian Development Bank, ESCAP, the International Labour Organization, the International Telecommunications Union, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the World Bank.

Asian Development Bank (ADB)

In August 2006, ADB signed an MoU with ASEAN to support ASEAN cooperation and integration initiatives through subregional programmes to narrow the development gap in a variety of sectors. These include the Greater Mekong Subregion Programme; the Initiative for ASEAN Integration; the Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Viet Nam Growth Triangle; the Brunei Darussalam,
Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area; and the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle. The MoU calls for closer working arrangements to support faster, more sustainable and inclusive development, especially in poorer countries. It also calls for continued cooperation in such activities as the ASEAN+3 Economic Review and Policy Dialogue Process, the Chiang Mai Initiative, the ASEAN+3 Asian Bond Markets Initiative (ABMI), and the Asia Recovery Information Centre. The MoU proposes joint work activities, including regional training programmes for ASEAN officials on trade agreements, capacity-building support for the Bureau for Economic Integration and Finance at the ASEAN Secretariat, and concrete actions in support of the creation of the ASEAN Economic Community. It refers to disseminating joint studies and exchanging information at the institutional level. A technical assistance programme on “strengthening the capacity of the ASEAN Secretariat in regional economic cooperation and policy dialogue” is under implementation, covering research capacity support, development of a regional economic integration web site and capacity-building activities for ASEAN Secretariat staff.

**BOX III-3**

**A model of collaboration**

In May 2008, following Cyclone Nargis, ASEAN, the Government of Myanmar and the United Nations, established a working-level mechanism to facilitate trust, confidence and cooperation in urgent post-Cyclone Nargis humanitarian relief and recovery work. The Tripartite Core Group of the ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force (TCG) became an effective model for cooperation between the international community and Myanmar for assisting Cyclone Nargis survivors (ASEAN, 2008b).

ESCAP, as the regional arm of the United Nations, played a crucial role in mobilizing technical, institutional, human and financial resources at the regional level, and channelling them to the country level via the TCG. In November 2008, following the ESCAP Executive Secretary’s consultations with the Prime Minister of Myanmar and the Chair of the TCG, it, organized with the support of the ASEAN Secretariat and the Government of Myanmar, a Regional High-Level Experts Group Meeting on Post-Nargis Recovery and Livelihood Opportunities. The outcomes of the meeting played a seminal role in the development of the Post-Nargis Recovery Plan (PONREPP). In November 2009, ESCAP and the ASEAN Secretariat jointly organized the Post-Nargis Regional Partnership Conference which raised over $103 million from the international donor community to support the implementation of the PONREPP priority action plan. Following the successful culmination of the TCG’s recovery work, the ASEAN Secretariat and ESCAP teamed up once again to organize the Post-Nargis Lesson Learning Conference, at which they jointly launched a series of publications prepared by the ASEAN Secretariat with the aim of institutionalizing the good practices from their experience in Myanmar and strengthening the partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations.

From a crisis emerged an opportunity for ASEAN to respond quickly and effectively in support of one of its members; and for the United Nations to place at ASEAN’s disposal the combined weight of its humanitarian, diplomatic and development machinery and expertise to save lives and rebuild the social and economic fabric of communities. The new bond forged in the face of dire immediate needs has strengthened the ASEAN-United Nations partnership in a way that no communiqué or memorandum of understanding could have. Furthermore, the tripartite partnership has opened a window of re-engagement for major financial institutions, such as the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, which had not worked in Myanmar for over 20 years.

**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)**

ESCAP has an ongoing programme on benchmarking of regional trade agreements for the purpose of transforming them into drivers of dynamic regional cooperation. ASEAN is accorded special attention due to its achievements in trade integration. ESCAP is well-positioned to contribute to the process of peer review to benchmark the progress of trade and trade-related integration. As ASEAN grows in strength and intensifies its integration, there will be more opportunities for ESCAP to augment its current collaboration with a number of trade research institutions in ASEAN member States. Joint training, research and advocacy activities will be possible in several areas, in particular rationalization of non-tariff barriers, recognition and harmonization of standards, introduction of development-friendly private sector practices and norms, standardization of trade documentation, improving understanding of the mechanisms of inclusive and coherent trade and investment policymaking, and ASEAN’s response to external and internal trade and financial shocks.
Following the 2008 financial and economic crisis, financial cooperation has been elevated to the top of the regional and international policy agendas. As a part of its ongoing analytical work, ESCAP can play a valuable role in building consensus around policy actions that broaden and deepen financial integration in ASEAN and beyond. Given its wide membership, ESCAP can act as a bridge between ASEAN and a broader Asia-Pacific financial integration process, and the reform of the multilateral architecture on financial issues. At its 66th Session held in Incheon, the ESCAP Secretariat received a mandate from its member States to assist them in developing a regional financial architecture that can assist in effective intermediation between the region’s massive foreign exchange reserves and its growing unmet investment requirements. Such a financial architecture could assist in closing the development gaps that exist between ASEAN member States as in other sub-regions by making financing available for infrastructure development.

International Labour Organization (ILO)

Cooperation between ILO and the ASEAN Secretariat over the years has included a joint review of core labour standards in ASEAN countries and the publication of joint studies on the labour and employment implications of the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (AFTA). In 2007, ILO and ASEAN signed a Cooperation Agreement that provides a framework for joint programmes and activities in order to promote decent work while supporting ASEAN Community-building initiatives. More recently, ASEAN Labour Ministers adopted a Work Programme for 2010-2015 which sets out four strategic priorities offering a framework for ILO-ASEAN collaboration. These are: to build a legal foundation to ensure that labour rights and conditions of work are protected in law and its application; to build institutional capacity for the enforcement of labour laws and regulations; to foster an informed social dialogue at national and regional levels; and to develop labour markets and a competitive workforce.

Activities in pursuit of these priorities include, for example, the development of industrial relations supported through seminars, such as the Singapore-hosted seminar on tripartism and social dialogue in November-December 2009 and the ILO-Japan-ASEAN tripartite meeting on industrial relations in Kuala Lumpur in February 2010. These regional events covered a range of issues, such as dispute prevention and resolution, collective bargaining, and the use of consultation mechanisms with employers and unions to deal with the effects of the financial/economic crisis. ILO also assisted ASEAN in developing the ‘Guidelines on Good Industrial Relations Practices’, which were formally adopted by the ASEAN Labour Ministers’ Meeting in June 2010. Furthermore, ILO cooperated with ASEAN in the area of youth employment, resulting, among other outcomes, in the joint publication ‘Youth Enterprises in Asia – Policies and Programmes’. The study analyses a range of international, regional and national youth entrepreneurship initiatives with a focus on ASEAN member States.

ILO will continue to collaborate with the ASEAN Secretariat to support the Asian Decent Work Decade and to ensure ASEAN regional integration efforts incorporate a strong social dimension.

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

ITU has been cooperating with the ASEAN Secretariat for many years. It has, for example, participated as a resource organization in meetings of the ASEAN Telecommunications Regulators Council (ATRC), the ASEAN Telecommunications Senior Officials Meeting (TELSOM) and the ASEAN Telecommunications and IT Ministers’ Meeting (TELMIN). In recent years, ITU has supported ASEAN in the conduct of the ‘Study on the Dynamics of Women in the ICT Sector in ASEAN Countries’ and co-organized the ITU-ASEAN Mobile Commerce Forum in 2009. For the past 15 years, ITU has organized annual subregional telecommunication meetings for the sub-ASEAN group of Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Viet Nam (CLMV). The meetings provide a forum for partnerships and resource mobilization, information exchange, and sharing of best practices and experiences on issues of common concern.

ASEAN, through TELSOM, has been invited by ITU to carry out joint activities to implement ITU’s programmes and Asia-Pacific Regional Initiatives, particularly in the areas of policy and regulation, broadband access, capacity-building and emergency telecommunications. In Thailand in particular, ITU has worked in close collaboration with the Government and local partners on a range of activities, such as Telecom/ICT policy and regulations, accessibility for persons with disabilities and rural communications. These activities aim to benefit not only Thailand but also all ASEAN member States. In addition, three out of six of ITU’s Asia-Pacific Centres of Excellence Network Nodes offering training programmes on specific telecommunications/ICT themes are based in ASEAN countries. They provide online and face to face training in collaboration with other partners in rural ICT development (Universiti Utara Malaysia),
business management (Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, Thailand) and broadcasting (Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development, Malaysia).

**United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**

Promoting pro-poor growth and globalization by stimulating domestic demand and strengthening regional trade is one of the priorities of UNDP in its efforts towards achieving the MDGs in Asia-Pacific (ESCAP, UNDP & ADB, 2010). Given the importance of inclusive and employment-intensive economic growth for progress on the MDGs — especially in an era when many developed country markets may import fewer goods, countries in the region will need to rebalance growth, basing it more on domestic consumption and expanding intraregional trade. UNDP’s Asia-Pacific Regional Centre has been working on inclusive growth and regional integration issues, and it can contribute to ASEAN efforts towards developing a common market.

**United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)**

As a specialized agency that promotes industrial development, UNIDO supports ASEAN member States in enhancing regional integration and competitiveness through various trade capacity-building programmes. In its role as the key technical cooperation provider of the United Nations in industry, UNIDO employs a multifaceted approach to make trade-related measures effective in developing countries. As a strategic partner for trade capacity-building, it generally addresses specific and immediate problems facing developing countries in export trade by increasing their supply capacity and then helping them to overcome the increasing technical barriers to trade. This involves support for enterprises in the agro-industrial sector, assistance to governments and trade associations, and the development of conformity assurance infrastructure. More specifically, UNIDO works in ASEAN member States like Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Viet Nam to strengthen institutional and national capacities related to standards, metrology, testing and quality (SMTQ). In Thailand, UNIDO’s trade capacity-building activities include upgrading chemical testing laboratories to meet EU regulations and the establishment of the REACH (EU law on chemicals) Information Center. UNIDO collaborates with the Ministry of Industry, Thailand Textile Institute, Management System Certification Institute and the Thailand Institute of Scientific and Technological Research. Its work in Thailand also includes strengthening the capacities of testing laboratories for food and agricultural products, and collaboration with the National Food Institute.

**United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)**

UNOPS is the fund manager for the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), which is a joint initiative and partnership designed to reduce poverty and increase access to markets amongst the 50 least developed countries globally, including ASEAN Least developed countries. The partnership includes the World Bank, IMF, WTO, UNCTAD, UNDP and the International Trade Center. The objectives of the EIF are to mainstream (integrate) trade into national development plans, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), of least developed countries, and to facilitate the coordinated delivery of trade-related technical assistance in response to needs identified by least developed countries. Built on the principles of country ownership and partnership, the EIF features an improved governance structure with the establishment of the Integrated Framework Steering Committee (IFSC) and the expanded IF Working Group (IFWG) for better coordination among donors, beneficiary Least developed countries and United Nations agencies; the IF Trust Fund, which finances mainstreaming work and improved coordination of the delivery of trade-related technical assistance among bilateral and multilateral donors within a coherent policy framework.

As a part of its Trust Fund Manager function, UNOPS not only collates and manages funds from donors, but also addresses capacity-building in recipient countries on fiduciary management, thus enabling them to effectively manage similar donor funds. Currently, Cambodia and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic are receiving such assistance. Since the EIF offers a mechanism for other bilateral put space to support similar objectives through this multidonor trust fund or separate bilateral agreements, such capacity-building has a long-lasting effect. There is a potential for other ASEAN member States to contribute funds to ASEAN least developed countries through this mechanism.

**World Bank**

The World Bank is conducting joint research and studies on the regional integration agenda to support analytical work for regional trade negotiations, trade facilitation and standards. These activities aim to support ASEAN in liberalizing the service sectors under the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint. The World Bank is also discussing an ASEAN Regional Infrastructure Finance Network and is
supporting development in the CLMV group as the region moves towards the 2015 target for economic integration.

Transportation networks

ASEAN has been engaged in coordinated efforts to promote transport linkages and logistics services to support the establishment of a single market and production base. In October 2009, ASEAN Heads of State/Government deliberated on the concept of ASEAN Connectivity (Box III-4) at the 15th ASEAN Summit and agreed that it would be vital to complete the physical road, rail, air and sea linkages within ASEAN.13

While considerable progress has been made, ASEAN member States still face the challenge of raising the quality of infrastructure across the subregion, including finding ways to finance the required investments. For example, work is needed to raise the ASEAN Highway Network to the agreed standards, and there is still considerable scope to expand and upgrade the subregion’s maritimeports and airports. Investment is also needed to improve intermodal points and create dry ports. ASEAN member States must work closely to coordinate efforts to build the missing links under the Singapore-Kunming Rail Link (SKRL) Project, which is to be completed by 2015. Furthermore, as trade between ASEAN and other subregions expands, there will be a need to examine ways of strengthening transport links between subregions.

The various land transport facilitation and multimodal transport agreements created by ASEAN have the potential to greatly improve the efficiency of transport operations across the subregion, bringing trade costs down and enhancing competitiveness, especially of the landlocked and least developed member States. The time is now ripe to implement these agreements, including their ratification by member States that have yet to do so and the conclusion of various protocols which will enhance the effectiveness of the agreements. Work is also needed to foster the development of the logistics, freight forwarding and multimodal sectors, for example, through training and capacity-building activities.

13 Source: http://www.aseansec.org/23573.htm

14 S. Pushpanathan, Deputy Secretary-General ASEAN, "ASEAN Connectivity and the ASEAN Economic Community", Paper presented at the 24th Asia-Pacific Roundtable, Kuala Lumpur, 7-9 June 2010 <http://www.aseansec.org/24808.htm>
Over the years, ESCAP has worked closely with ASEAN in increasing awareness, understanding and capacity to address the challenges and obstacles in the transport sector. Building on this history of cooperation, ESCAP and ASEAN could continue to work together in three main areas. First, further studies on the means of financing transport infrastructure of regional importance could be jointly conducted, particularly within the frameworks of the Asian Highway, ASEAN Highway and Trans-Asian Railway Networks. Meanwhile, the intermodality of and transport networks, and development of dry ports and inland container depots could be considered within the scope of a regional intergovernmental agreement on dry ports.

Second, for transport facilitation, rationalization of the ASEAN and GMS facilitation agreements, together with lessons learned in their development, could be considered along with accession to international transport agreements, including those identified in ESCAP resolution 48/11.15 ASEAN could also measure the effectiveness of facilitation measures by using ESCAP’s methodology for identifying bottlenecks in cross-border and transit transport.

Third, capacity-building is an important factor for enhancing the competence of logistics service providers. For the past several decades, ESCAP has been working closely in this area with transport operators and logistics service providers in ASEAN member States. A large number of trainers and trainees have benefited from this and sustainable training programmes are being established in ASEAN member States with ESCAP assistance. ESCAP is also ready to cooperate with ASEAN in addressing the need for consolidation and professionalization of the freight forwarding, multimodal and logistics industries.

**International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)**

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), a United Nations specialized agency, was created as an outcome of a Convention at the International Civil Aviation Conference in November 1944. ICAO has developed into a global forum for civil aviation and it is working to achieve its vision of safe, secure and sustainable development of civil aviation through cooperation among its member States. To facilitate the planning and implementation of ground services and facilities essential for international air transport operations, the world has been divided into nine air navigation regions. Forty States/Administrations of Asia-Pacific, including ASEAN member States, are accredited to the ICAO Asia and Pacific Regional Office in Bangkok since 28 October 1952.

The primary role of the ICAO Asia and Pacific Office is to foster implementation by States of the global ICAO Standards and Regional Air Navigation Plan in order to ensure the safety, security and efficiency of the Asia and Pacific regional air transport network. Measures to achieve this include promoting and monitoring implementation of the Global Air Navigation Plan, capacity-building assistance, identifying deficiencies and supporting corrective actions, and coordinating with other ICAO Regions to ensure the harmonized implementation of standards, programmes and technologies.

ICAO has been collaborating with the ASEAN Secretariat in various activities, promoting and supporting civil aviation development in the subregion. It has, for example, participated in meetings of the ASEAN Subcommittee on Civil Aviation and Related Services (ASCCARS), the ASEAN Senior Transport Officials Meeting (STOM) and the ASEAN Working Group meetings on air transport. In order to harmonize efforts initiated by ASEAN member States, ICAO provided updates to ASEAN meetings on the updated global ICAO policies, development status of International Standard and Recommended Practices (SARPs), Procedures of Air Navigation Services (PANS) and cooperative programmes in the areas of economic and technical cooperation.

Since all ASEAN member States are also ICAO members, they have worked with ICAO in the implementation of facilities and services in compliance with SARPs in order to achieve global seamless Communication Navigation Surveillance/ Air Traffic Management (CNS/ATM) systems. Most ASEAN member States are also members of ICAO regional programmes, such as the Cooperative Aviation Security Programme for Asia and Pacific (CASP-AP), the Cooperative Arrangement for the Prevention of Spread of Communicable disease through Air travel (CAPSCA) and the Cooperative Development of Operational Safety and Continuing Airworthiness Programme (COSCAP-SEA). These programmes ensure an exchange of experiences, technical assistance for capacity-building and effective management, especially in aviation security and safety issues.
United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

UNOPS is a central resource for the United Nations system in procurement and contracts management, as well as for civil works and physical infrastructure development, including related capacity development activities. It has accumulated significant hands-on experience in improving transportation networks, ranging from small-scale, labour-intensive, community-based road maintenance projects to multi-million dollar highway construction programmes involving local and international contractors. Its experience includes the construction of bridges, bus station, harbours and customs facilities. UNOPS can contribute to the promotion of necessary transport linkages and logistics services in support of ASEAN’s goal of a common market and production base.

International migration

In 2004 at the 13th ASEAN Summit, ASEAN leaders issued the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers with the aim of promoting the “full potential and dignity of migrant workers in a climate of freedom, equity, and stability” (ASEAN, 2007a). For the migrant-receiving countries, the Declaration called for greater harmony and tolerance with migrant workers, offering information, training and education, access to justice, and social welfare services, as appropriate – as well as fair employment protection, payment of wages, and adequate access to decent working and living conditions for migrant workers. For the sending countries, it emphasized the need to ensure workers had alternatives to migration and those who wanted to migrate will be assisted through adequate processes for recruitment, preparation for deployment overseas and protection when abroad – as well as repatriation and reintegration when they returned. To carry out this mandate, ASEAN has established a Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ACMW).

ESCAP

In September 2008, ESCAP coorganized with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) the Asia-Pacific High-level Meeting on International Migration and Development. Six ASEAN member States participated actively in discussing the protection of migrant workers. ESCAP can cooperate with ASEAN in supporting further dialogue among its member States to facilitate migration through regular channels and to provide protection for migrant workers.

ILO

As a tripartite organization representing governments, workers and employers’ organizations, ILO helps build consensus among social partners in ASEAN countries of origin and destination. This supports ASEAN member States in their efforts to ensure migrant workers do not displace host country workers, nor are they subjected to unfair treatment or abuse.

The protection of migrant workers’ rights is a priority for ASEAN and ILO. ILO is working with ACMW to carry out activities in their work plan, and with the member States and social partners to fulfil their obligations under the Declaration. It has initiated and is providing continuing support to the ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour, an institutionalized annual event, unique in its broad engagement of governments, workers’ and employers’ organizations, and civil society partners. Over the years, steady progress has been made in building trust, understanding divergent positions and collaborating on joint initiatives. The second Forum was held in Bangkok in July 2009 and the third in July 2010 in Ha Noi. ILO also participated in the ASEAN Workshop on Eliminating Recruitment Malpractices in April 2010 in Singapore.

For the coming year, ILO has planned a series of regional training workshops on the labour dimensions of trafficking, regulation of recruitment agencies, and the role of labour attachés and consular officials in protecting migrants’ rights. It will continue to facilitate the sharing of information, experiences and good practices through regional meetings and an online Community of Practice on Migration and Trafficking.

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has been strengthening its cooperation with the ASEAN Secretariat in recent years on several migration- and trafficking-related activities. IOM has presence in the ASEAN +3 countries of Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam, Myanmar, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea. In 2005, ASEAN member States commissioned IOM to conduct a pilot research project to identify best practices in data collection on trafficking and to prepare a situation report on Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand. This was aimed at ensuring information and knowledge are in place towards effective combating of trafficking. The multicountry research evoked the following principles for data on trafficking: (a) to be useful, data has to be relevant to objectives; (b) data needs to be regular and reliable; (c) data must be protected; and (d) data must be turned
into information and knowledge. The results of the research were published by ASEAN and IOM in late 2006 in *ASEAN and Trafficking in Persons: Using Data as a Tool to Combat Trafficking in Persons*.

IOM has also supported ASEAN, the United Nations and the Government of Myanmar in the Post-Nargis Joint Assessment. It aims to support the ACMW and has proposed a tailored training programme facilitated by IOM’s International Migration Law and Legal Affairs Department.

**UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women)**

In May 2008, UNIFEM organized a Regional Consultation on Gender Perspectives on ACMW and the Civil Society Draft Framework Instrument. This multistakeholder consultation with more than 60 national government and NGO participants from ASEAN member States provided valuable inputs and made recommendations to ASEAN on engendering the framework instrument, highlighting some of the concerns of women migrant workers in the ASEAN subregion.

**Disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response**

In recent years, the ASEAN region has suffered some of the world’s most devastating natural disasters – notably the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami and, more recently, the 2008 Cyclone Nargis and the 2009 Typhoon Ketsana. Among other disaster preparedness measures, improved early-warning systems could reduce the risks from such disasters. Cooperation for the upstream end of such systems – ensuring risk knowledge, and hazard monitoring and warning services – will require collective action among countries, and regional and international organizations, with coordination by the ASEAN Secretariat. Cooperation for the downstream end of the system – dissemination, communication and response – will mean building the capacities of governments and local communities.

The United Nations’ Asia-Pacific RCM, the ASEAN Secretariat and the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management (ACDM) are currently exploring opportunities for cooperation to strengthen ASEAN’s capacity to support member States in disaster management. Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response in national and sectoral development planning and programme implementation, in line with the priorities of the Hyogo Framework for Action, is a part of these discussions which cover, among others, risk and vulnerability assessment and risk reduction; preparedness, early warning and monitoring; prevention and mitigation; response and recovery; and aspects of reconstruction and development.

An effective regional disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response system will require a clear delineation of responsibilities between different entities of ASEAN member States in order to maximize synergies, along with extensive partnerships with the United Nations system and other key stakeholders, such as regional organizations, civil society and the private sector. It will also require strong coordination mechanisms at all levels, taking into consideration the significant work of such bodies as the ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee, WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones and UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (ICG/ITO WTS), and various national governments.

**ESCAP**

ESCAP is mandated to support regional cooperation in disaster risk reduction, including through the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action in the Asia and Pacific region. Through its ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction programme, it is promoting a regional mechanism for the provision of critical information for all phases of disaster management and emergency communications. ESCAP is also strengthening country capacities for managing disaster processes, including training on the damage and loss assessment methodology (DALA) which was conducted in cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the World Bank’s Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR). ESCAP has established a new intergovernmental Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction. In its first session in March 2009 in Bangkok, the Committee considered policy options and strategies on multihazard disaster risk reduction and mitigation; regional cooperation mechanisms for disaster risk management, including space and other technical support systems; and multi-hazard assessment, preparedness, early warning and response to disaster risks.

At the country level, ESCAP joined a team led by the Government of Cambodia to carry out — together with the World Bank and other development partners — a comprehensive Post-disaster Damage,

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16 UNIFEM is a part of United Nations Women.
17 ESCAP resolution 64/2 of 30 April 2008 on regional cooperation in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters in Asia and the Pacific (see *ibid*).
Loss and Needs Assessment (PDNA) based on the DALA methodology in the aftermath of Typhoon Ketsana. A comprehensive plan for long term recovery and reconstruction was developed. ESCAP worked with the Government of Cambodia on resource mobilization for implementing the PDNA and providing technical assistance to build the institutional capacity of the National Committee on Disaster Management.

Under the ESCAP Regional Space Applications Programme for Sustainable Development, a 'Regional Collaborative Mechanism on Monitoring and Early Warning of Disasters, particularly drought' was launched in September 2010, with the aim of providing satellite-based information. The drought-prone ASEAN countries of Cambodia, The Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam are members of the mechanism, with Thailand contributing its satellite resources along with China and India. Further development of the mechanism will involve its expansion to cover other disasters, particularly floods.

At the broader Asia-Pacific regional level, the ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee and the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones promote and coordinate the planning and implementation of measures to minimize loss of life and material damage caused by typhoons. Many ASEAN countries are members of these intergovernmental bodies. ESCAP and UN/ISDR are jointly producing the first issue of the Asia-Pacific Disaster Report, to be launched at the 4th Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction during 25-28 October 2010. The report, which covers all ASEAN countries, provides a regional snapshot of trends in disasters, including disaster risks which are on the rise. It explores value-added ways of reducing these risks through partnerships among relevant stakeholders. ESCAP will launch an Asia-Pacific Gateway on Disaster Risk Reduction and Development at the second session of its Committee on ICT in November 2010. The Gateway is a web portal to promote the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction into development planning for Asia-Pacific countries. It will aggregate relevant information from existing online sources in the region and elsewhere to build an online community of practice where professionals can exchange information and knowledge.

ASEAN and the UN could strengthen their cooperation within the framework of the ESCAP Multi-Donor Voluntary Trust Fund on Tsunami Early Warning Arrangements in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia – the ‘Regional Tsunami Trust Fund’. The Fund is already supporting a number of ASEAN countries in the development of multi-hazard early-warning systems, and standard operating procedures for disaster and community preparedness. ESCAP and the ASEAN Secretariat could collaborate in ESCAP-convened high-level meetings of policy makers, development partners and experts to facilitate experience-sharing and to strengthen joint efforts to support inclusive and sustainable recovery from disasters.

**Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)**

FAO assists its member countries in integrating disaster risk reduction measures in agriculture and food sector policies and practices, and has a key role to play in protecting and restoring agriculture-based livelihoods in the aftermath of a disaster. It supports national efforts to strengthen disaster risk management systems and integrate disaster risk reduction into sustainable development planning, and the implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery. Its activities include hazard profiling and vulnerability assessments for the agriculture, forestry and fishery sectors; participation in national/local multisectoral disaster risk profiling exercises; assessing and enhancing capacities for disaster risk reduction within sectoral line departments and extension services; integrating disaster risk reduction in sectoral development plans or country development assistance programming exercises; promoting sustainable natural resource management in land, water, watershed, forestry and coastal areas; identifying, documenting, adapting and facilitating information exchange and replication of good agriculture, fishery and forestry practices for disaster risk reduction; participating in interagency processes for enhancing emergency preparedness; and providing emergency response, integrating the ‘building back better’ principle in the design and implementation of post-emergency assistance. (FAO, 2008a)

The FAO Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Strategy emphasizes strengthening subregional cooperation to reduce disaster risk, particularly in the context of ASEAN. The strategy should be reinforced by the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Response (AADMER), which came into effect in December 2009. FAO’s field experiences with DRM, supported by normative studies, show that there are few practical tools available to guide the analysis of national, district and local institutional systems for DRM, and to conceptualize and provide demand-responsive capacity-building thereafter. In an attempt to fill this gap, FAO has produced a guide book on Disaster Risk Management Systems Analysis containing a set of tools developed and

19 Typhoon Ketsana struck the ASEAN region in September 2009, killing more than 700 people in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Philippines and Viet Nam, besides causing enormous damage and destruction of economic and social infrastructures.
tested in various FAO field projects for DRM (FAO, 2008b), which can be adapted for application in ASEAN member States.

**International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Secretariat (UN/ISDR)**

UN/ISDR serves as the focal point in the United Nations system for the coordination of disaster reduction, and to ensure synergies among the disaster reduction activities of the United Nations system and regional organizations and activities in socio-economic and humanitarian fields. It also serves as an international information clearing house on disaster reduction, developing awareness campaigns and producing articles, journals and other publications, and promotional materials related to disaster reduction. The ASEAN Secretariat, UN/ISDR and the World Bank share a common goal of promoting disaster resilient nations and safer communities. To strengthen this cooperation, the three parties signed a five-year Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) in May 2009. This MoC has multiple objectives, all aimed at helping ASEAN reduce disaster risks and protect its citizens from hardship and damages caused by natural disasters. Joint actions proposed under the MoC include the development of legislation, policies and action plans; resource mobilization; and capacity-building of both the ASEAN Secretariat and member States on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.

The ISDR Asian Partnership on Disaster Reduction (IAP) is an informal multistakeholder forum that was expanded in 2007 to now include some 40 entities, including United Nations entities, national and regional organizations, such as ASEAN, donor agencies and civil society organizations (CSOs). After attending an IAP meeting as an observer in November 2007, ASEAN’s ACDM has endorsed the participation of the ASEAN Secretariat and the ACDM Chairperson in IAP meetings. The IAP could ensure availability of expertise, guidance and coherent support to ACDM and assist ASEAN member States in mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into their national development strategies and plans.

**ITU**

The ITU Framework for Cooperation in Emergencies (IFCE), launched in 2007, provides a public-private partnership platform for disaster relief and response. Under the IFCE, ITU has provided technical assistance in response to disasters worldwide through the provision of telecommunication/ICT equipment and services to governments for rescue operations. In the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in ASEAN, it provided satellite phones/terminals with free airtime and logistics to Myanmar following Cyclone Nargis in 2008 and to Indonesia in response to the Java earthquake in 2009. ITU, jointly with ESCAP, UN/ISDR and others, organized a high-level session at the 3rd Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Malaysia in 2008. ITU and ESCAP have also collaborated to establish the Regional Platform for Disaster Communications Management.

**Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**

UNHCR has been conducting an emergency management training programme for some years throughout South-East Asia. From 2005 to 2009, this has taken the form of a cooperative endeavour with ASEAN’s ACDM. UNHCR’s support to ACDM has included the provision and funding of expertise in contingency planning and emergency response, and support for ACDM focal points in all ASEAN member States. This has resulted in the signing of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response, the establishment of an interim ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management, the development of standard operating procedures, and a number of training exercises for disaster response which have seen several ASEAN countries contributing disaster response teams and learning to work together.

**United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD)**

UNCRD has promoted effective disaster management since 1985 with a focus on community-based initiatives. It initiated a housing safety programme after the Yogyarkarta Earthquake in Indonesia in 2006 and promoted the empowerment of community people for building disaster resilient houses and communities through housing safety programmes and construction manuals. The experiences gained are being disseminated to disaster-prone areas, including in the ASEAN countries, to promote preventive measures.

**UNDP**

UNDP has been collaborating with the Intergovernmental Coordination Group of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System (ICG-IOTWS) in providing standardized guidelines for assessing and mitigating tsunami risks across the Indian Ocean, and using the guidelines for developing capacities of ASEAN member States. In order to improve preparedness

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and standard operating procedures for tsunami early warning systems, UNDP has supported the organization of the Indian Ocean-wide drill, known as IO Wave’09. The drill was led by the Government of Indonesia with participation from all Indian Ocean countries. Ongoing policy and advisory services provided by UNDP to the Government of Indonesia have resulted in it being recognized as a regional tsunami watch provider, making it the first ASEAN country to achieve this status.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)

The partnership between ASEAN and UN-Habitat has emphasized mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in the housing sector in Myanmar, assisting the Government of Myanmar in addressing priority issues identified by Multi-hazard Programme and Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction in Myanmar (MAPDRR). UN-HABITAT is also sharing the best practices and lessons learned from the TCG partnership in Myanmar at appropriate international forums, for example, the Shanghai DRR Forum in July 2010.

At the regional level, UN-HABITAT is working with local authorities and their associations of cities to promote the Making Cities Resilient Campaign facilitated by ISDR. It is supporting national launches of the campaign in Thailand and Myanmar. A preliminary discussion has been held with the ASEAN Secretariat to strengthen its work in this area.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

UNFPA assists countries in the ASEAN region in ensuring reproductive health, population and gender issues, particularly gender-based violence, are addressed in all phases of emergency response and preparedness. It supports the incorporation of these issues in national disaster management plans, such as in Indonesia, and the strengthening of data collection for the purpose. It has taken the lead in building the capacities of national partners in implementing the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for Reproductive Health in Crisis Settings, which addresses the issues of maternal health, family planning, sexually transmitted infections, HIV and gender-based violence. At the regional level, UNFPA plans to provide assistance to ASEAN to develop regional capacity, including on MISP, and ensure the incorporation of reproductive health, population and gender issues in regional disaster management efforts. As a lead agency in the domain of data for development, UNFPA offers technical support for data collection and analysis, both prior to and during crises.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), through its Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, has been working with ASEAN since 2003 in supporting capacity strengthening for disaster response and preparedness. It worked closely with ASEAN emergency professionals during the response to Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar under the TCG.

Using the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) platform, OCHA has also trained a number of ASEAN emergency professionals and continues to support capacity strengthening of ASEAN’s Emergency Rapid Assessment Team (ERAT) to operationalize provisions of AADMER. Since 2006, OCHA has been participating in ASEAN regional disaster management exercises called ARDEX.

A draft MoU between OCHA and ASEAN is presently being developed to build on the existing international architecture for coordination of humanitarian assistance and to further defining the ASEAN-OCHA relationship in joint activities in disaster preparedness and humanitarian assistance.

World Food Programme (WFP)

WFP has been working closely with ASEAN in developing regional and national disaster management capacities, in particular in areas where WFP has recognized global expertise, such as food assistance, logistics, emergency telecommunication and disaster management exercises. The focus of WFP-ASEAN interaction has been on pragmatic operational issues. As an option for any ASEAN emergency response depot, WFP has offered free use of the recently established United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot at Subang in Malaysia. It has welcomed possible ASEAN contributions to WFP food assistance, including through such mechanisms as the ASEAN Plus Three Rice Reserve. Given ASEAN’s emerging disaster response capability, discussion are taking place between the two organizations on the shared use of assets, for example, strategic transport. WFP and ASEAN have agreed to collaborate in capacity-building through training, exercises and sharing of best practices. WFP is also working with ASEAN on preparedness
plans to deal with emerging infectious diseases, with a special focus on avian and human influenza. These plans, in turn, could be springboards for pandemic preparedness plans.

**Environmental sustainability and climate change**

The November 2007 ASEAN Declaration on Environmental Sustainability, adopted by ASEAN Heads of State and Government at the 13th ASEAN Summit, committed to achieving the ‘common goal of a clean and green ASEAN’. The Declaration focuses action on climate mitigation. It encourages efforts to develop an ASEAN Climate Change Initiative. The elaboration of the initiative will play an important role in ASEAN’s response to climate change. It can lead to reforms that better equip ASEAN for addressing long-term climate change-related decision-making and cooperation needs.

At the 16th ASEAN Summit in April 2010, the leaders called for a legally binding global pact on climate change and urged richer nations to provide them with “scaled-up” financial help to combat its effects. They reiterated that a new deal should go further than the non-binding pact reached in Copenhagen in December 2009 and urged all parties to work together to secure a legally binding agreement, particularly to limit the increase in average global temperature to below two degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial level. The leaders further urged richer countries to continue taking the lead with improved targets for cutting carbon dioxide emissions blamed for climate change and stated they would also consider the possibility of developing an ASEAN action plan to better understand and respond to climate change.

**ESCAP**

ESCAP serves as the regional platform for policy dialogue to forge Asian and Pacific perspectives on the post-2012 climate framework. Since 2005, it has promoted the ‘Green Growth’ approach as a tool for environmentally sustainable economic growth, and as a strategy for climate change mitigation and adaptation. In line with the approach, ESCAP is ready to work with ASEAN on developing an evidence-based strategy for low-carbon development and climate-resilient ASEAN societies. The strategy can provide innovative policy options for proactive mitigation and adaptation in the context of ASEAN-wide sustainable development.

As mitigation measures are primarily energy-related, ESCAP and the ASEAN Centre for Energy (ACE) could collaborate on identifying effective measures to deal with climate change, including through a low-carbon development path (LCDP), emphasizing development options that also contribute to mitigating climate change. It could strengthen ACE’s role as a centre of excellence for South-South cooperation on energy security issues, facilitating contact with entities in diverse subregions within and outside of Asia and the Pacific. ESCAP and ACE could also work together to facilitate the establishment of ASEAN-related links and synergies in the proposed Trans-Asian Energy System (TAES), for example, through a series of policy dialogues towards agreement on the concept and modality of operating the TAES in the ASEAN subregion.

As a co-founder of the Asia-Pacific Water Forum, along with the Japan Water Forum and ADB, ESCAP collaborates with the ASEAN Task Force on Water and the South-East Asia Water Forum (SEAWF) in monitoring water sector investments, achievements on water and sanitation under the MDGs, and readiness in adaptation to climate change with regard to water resources in preparation for the second Asia-Pacific Water Summit (APWS) to be held in Singapore in 2010.

As the ASEAN region is prone to natural disasters and has the world’s highest level of human casualties from such disasters, ESCAP has recently intensified its work on developing an integrated approach to disaster risk reduction and the building of climate
change-resilient societies. The outcome of this work will be shared with ASEAN entities. ESCAP and the ASEAN Secretariat can cooperate in assisting ASEAN member States to forge an ASEAN position for the post-2012 climate framework.

**FAO**

FAO and the ASEAN Secretariat have collaborated closely on the Code of Practice for Forest Harvesting in Asia and the Pacific, which was endorsed by ASEAN Senior Officers on Forestry in 2001, and subsequently by ASEAN Ministers. This was followed by joint monitoring of ASEAN country-level implementation of the code of practice and a formal assessment of the implementation by the ASEAN Secretariat in 2007. FAO has also collaborated with the ASEAN Secretariat in fire management and related capacity-building, and in policy dialogues with ASEAN countries on combating illegal logging and associated trade, including capacity-building in law enforcement and governance. A joint regional project on 'strengthening monitoring, assessment and reporting on sustainable forest management in Asia' aims to enhance the criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management.

An ASEAN-FAO Regional Conference on Food Security, held in May 2009 in Bangkok, has proposed to address food security together with sustainable agricultural development, good practices in biofuel production, and climate change mitigation and adaptation in South-East Asia. The aim is to strengthen the resilience of people and ecosystems, and to enhance the adaptive capacity of farmers and fishermen to cope with the threat of climate change. FAO can assist ASEAN in the implementation of integrated climate change adaptation and mitigation measures in the agriculture, fisheries, livestock and forestry sectors, including response to climate-related disasters. Its information sharing and networking on climate change impacts, disaster management and response, and tested practices for adaptation and mitigation offer ASEAN countries opportunities for mutual learning, coordinated responses, and cost reduction in planning and implementation.

FAO is also supporting ASEAN in the development and implementation of the Multisectoral Framework on Climate Change: Agriculture and Forestry towards Food Security (AFCC). In cooperation with the ASEAN Secretariat and other partners, it is organizing a regional workshop on climate change and food security in the ASEAN Plus Three countries in December 2010.

**ITU**

ITU has been active on climate change since the adoption of Resolution 35 at the Kyoto Plenipotentiary Conference in 1994 on 'Telecommunications Support for the Protection of the Environment'. Since then ITU has been drafting guidelines indicating how member States can make use of more energy-efficient ICT equipment in mitigating and adapting to climate change, including the utilization of emergency telecommunications and alerting systems for disaster relief. In addition, ITU has been collaborating with the United Nations system Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) to help develop a coordinated United Nations climate change strategy.

**UNCRD**

UNCRD is working on transport and waste management in the context of environment and climate change, covering all ASEAN member States. Regional forums organized under the Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) and Reduce, Reuse and Recycle (3R) initiatives led by UNCRD provide opportunities to ASEAN member States to learn and share best practices, tools and technologies in the two areas. UNCRD facilitates intergovernmental and interagency coordination in organizing the forums, and interfaces between governments, international organizations, experts and other organizations for active policy consultation and dialogue on transport and waste management issues, including interrelated sustainability issues. It also provides technical support for the development of national strategies in sectors of interest to ASEAN member States, and for country capacity development through its training and capacity-building component.

**UNDP**

In the overall context of supporting ASEAN member States in their efforts to accelerate the transition to low carbon and climate resilient development pathways, UNDP provides a range of services, such as facilitating and brokering access to global environmental/climate funding sources — Global Environment Facility (GEF), Least Developed Countries Fund, Special Climate Change Fund and Adaptation Fund. It assists them in preparing, implementing and monitoring climate and environment programmes, supports policy dialogues, disseminates best practices, and shares knowledge. UNDP’s work is driven by demand
from ASEAN member States and by opportunities that emerge through its dialogues with them. The work is embedded in UNDP’s overall mandate to build national capacity for human development. UNDP’s support focuses on ecosystems and natural resources, water, land, biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, energy, ozone layer protection, and chemicals management.

UNDP’s next Asia-Pacific Human Development Report is on climate change, focusing on people- and poverty-centered vulnerabilities to climate change impacts, and opportunities for adaptation and mitigation strategies for a wider green economy. It has direct relevance for ASEAN member countries in which critical MDG environmental indicators have seen reversals or stalled progress, such as increasing emissions of greenhouse gases and declining capacity to sequester them.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

UNEP’s collaboration with the ASEAN began in 2001 through its assistance to government negotiators in developing the terms of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution. UNEP supported the ASEAN Secretariat in developing the ASEAN State of Environment Report for the years 2002 and 2006. In June 2008, UNEP and the ASEAN Secretariat supported the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration in hosting the ASEAN+6 City Forum on Climate Change which resulted in the Bangkok Declaration for ASEAN+6. As a follow-up, UNEP, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration and associate partners would like to work with ASEAN in promoting the objectives of the Forum as spelt out in the Declaration. UNEP has provided assistance to ASEAN member States in raising the awareness and building the capacity of youth to improve their understanding of and analytical skill on climate change, sustainable forest management and other issues of regional significance. UNEP is also working with the ASEAN Center for Biodiversity to develop a regional Invasive Alien Species Programme in ASEAN Heritage Sites.

UN-HABITAT

UN-HABITAT is implementing the Water for Asian Cities (WAC) initiative and the Mekong Region Water and Sanitation Initiative (MEK-WATSAN) in several ASEAN countries, with the objective of supporting partner countries to achieve their urban water- and sanitation-related MDGs, and to promote pro-poor investments to increase access to water and sanitation and sustainable urban human settlements in the region. UN-HABITAT and the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) have also promoted regional cooperation on value-based water education through schools in the region. UN-HABITAT is implementing the regional programme, Cities in Climate Change Initiative (CCCI), and is working with several cities in ASEAN member countries to support local governments to more readily respond to the climatic threats they face (adaptation), and to take bold steps in reducing cities’ climate footprints (mitigation). These regional programmes could be further enhanced under future collaboration with ASEAN.

UNIDO

UNIDO works with ASEAN countries to achieve greener industries and low carbon development. In 2009, it organized the International Conference on Green Industry in Asia in partnership with the Government of Philippines, ILO, UNEP and ESCAP. Twenty-two participating countries, including all ASEAN developing countries, adopted the Manila Declaration and Framework for Action to reduce the resource intensity and carbon emissions of industries. As a result, UNIDO launched the Regional Programme on Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production (RECP) for ASEAN countries in 2010. The programme will provide technical assistance to participating countries and help them achieve low carbon, low water and low materials production, as well as reduce the environmental footprint of a value chain. UNIDO provides technical assistance to ASEAN countries to promote energy efficiency in the industries through System Optimization and Energy Management Standards. Its Regional Forum on Best Available Technology/Best Environmental Practice (BAT/BEP) has been instrumental in bringing ASEAN countries to work together and share experience in response to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). UNIDO is working with participating countries from the Forum on two regional projects to demonstrate BAT/BEP in fossil-fired utilities and industrial boilers, and thermal processes in the metallurgical industry.

UNOPS

UNOPS has an extensive portfolio in environment on behalf of its partners to help reverse environmental damage, mitigate environmental risks, raise local, regional and global awareness, and better resource management. The portfolio could help ASEAN member countries to promote environmental sustainability and implement climate change adaptation and mitigation measures. UNOPS collaborates closely with UNEP, UNDP and the World Bank, to facilitate international cooperation
on preventing and reversing the degradation of international waters by pollution, overfishing, drought, habitat change and invasive species. It also provides services to GEF-financed climate initiatives, such as the UNDP Community-based Adaptation Programme which field tests small-scale projects and policy initiatives to research adaptation at the local level. These efforts include UNDP capacity development and technical assistance projects that help countries develop adaptation policies and frameworks, climate risk analyses and management solutions. UNOPS also supports the GEF-funded Small Grants Programme to support conservation projects and helps create systems to mitigate environmental risk.

**World Bank**

Since 2007, the World Bank has been providing technical assistance to the ASEAN Secretariat to increase the impact of forest law enforcement and governance. This aims to help ASEAN member States in addressing illegal logging and forest-related corruption through the provision of more substantive and higher quality analysis leading to stronger ownership of forest law enforcement and governance initiatives. The World Bank is also supporting ASEAN in conducting a climate change awareness campaign.

**World Health Organization (WHO)**

At the request of South-East Asian Regional Ministers of Health, WHO is implementing a training course for raising national and regional level awareness about the impact of climate change on human health. A regional framework has been developed to build the capacity of the public health sector in preparing for and responding to climate change.

**Food security**

With rapidly fluctuating food prices and low stocks of grain, the international community has become increasingly concerned about food security. One indication of a lack of food security in South-East Asia is that in 2005, 28 per cent of children were underweight (ESCAP, 2007c) and in 2004-2006, 15 per cent of the population was below the minimum level of dietary energy consumption (FAO, 2009). Several South-East Asian countries experienced soaring food prices in 2007-08 with the most severe impacts falling on small farmers and poor rural and urban households. While food prices have come down from their June 2008 peaks by 38 per cent in September 2010, they remain higher than in early 2007 when they started to increase steeply. The OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2010-2019 has projected food prices to rise again.

The ASEAN region is a net exporter of several food commodities and has sufficient food supply to feed its people. ASEAN’s rice production of rice has increased steadily from 120.7 million tons in 1993 to 178.8 million tons in 2006, with rice exports accounting for almost 50 per cent of the region’s total global exports in the 2006/2007 production year (ASEAN Business Advisory Council, 2008a). ASEAN members States include the world’s largest rice exporters – Thailand and Viet Nam – and the world’s largest rice importer – the Philippines (ASEAN Business Advisory Council, 2008b).

Potential future increases in food prices could reinvoke protectionist measures, such as rice export bans, adopted by some ASEAN countries in 2007-2008. The decision of rice producing countries to impose export restrictions on rice not only significantly undermined regional solidarity, a key component of the ASEAN’s effort to achieve its ASEAN Economic Community objective, but also inflamed further panic and encouraged other rice exporting countries across the globe to pursue similar offsetting policies (Chandra & Lontoh, 2010). While such measures may calm domestic fears and prevent civil unrest in the short-term, they may have undesirable consequences that undermine national, regional and even global food security. Export bans can, for example, not only increase prices for people in food-importing countries or encourage smuggling, but also impede agricultural development in the exporting countries and thereby threaten long-term domestic and international food security and, in turn, political stability.

In 1979, ASEAN established the ASEAN Food Security Reserve (AFSR) with 67,000 metric tons of rice and, in 2003, ASEAN+3 established the East Asia Emergency Rice Reserve (EAERR). During the 2007-2008 food price crisis, countries like the Lao People’s Democratic Republic established rice banks. In 2008, the United Nations High-level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis drafted a Comprehensive Framework for Action. This urges countries not to increase national food stocks as it would simply inflate prices. Instead it promotes programmes which develop regional stocks or food reserve agreements, virtual stocks, financial instruments including options, and weather risk insurance or bonds and contracts with the local private sector to manage stocks (United Nations, 2008a).

ASEAN ministers who met in Manila in October, 2008 declared their support for a regional rice action plan proposed by the International Rice Research
Institute. This involved measures for boosting yields, using new technology and introducing policy reforms (Reuters, 2008).

ASEAN countries have benefited from emergency food assistance from multilateral and bilateral donors, in small but significant amounts. Between 1998 and 2007, food aid was delivered to Cambodia, Indonesia, the The Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam – as well as to Timor-Leste. This represented between two and five per cent of annual global food aid distribution. Among United Nations agencies, those most directly concerned with food security in ASEAN are FAO and WFP (WFP, 2008).


**FAO**

FAO has been collaborating with ASEAN in various activities to promote and support food security and sustainable agricultural development. These include extensive programmes on animal health and disease, agricultural development and water supplies, and fisheries development. FAO is collaborating with the ASEAN Secretariat in implementing the ASEAN Integrated Food Security Framework and the ASEAN Strategic Plan of Action on Food Security (2009-13). In addition to participating in the Senior Officials Meetings and Ministerial Meetings of the ASEAN Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) and contributing technical inputs and advice, it organized the ASEAN-FAO Regional Conference on Food Security in Thailand in May 2009. FAO and the ASEAN Secretariat will jointly organize a Regional Consultation on Food Security, tentatively timed for November 2010.

FAO has partnered with ASEAN to promote policy dialogues and actions in national and regional initiatives related to the East Asia Emergency Rice Reserve and the ASEAN Food Security Information System (AFSIS), for example, organizing a session on food security in the Senior Officers Meeting of AMAF in October 2008 in Viet Nam. It has been a key partner in the organization of the biannual South-East Asia Water Forums — convened by the South-East Asia Water Partnership — that provide inputs to meetings of the ASEAN Senior Water Officials which are followed by meetings of the ASEAN Ministers on Water.

In 2007, the Council of ASEAN Ministers on Water called for the establishment of a knowledge hub on irrigation modernization and a harmonized irrigation benchmarking system, and for the development of national drought management strategies. FAO was a resource institution at a recent Workshop on Risks and Impacts from Extreme Events in Drought in ASEAN Countries. It could collaborate with the ASEAN Secretariat in developing a subregional (South-East Asia) water investment framework addressing food security, environment and poverty reduction issues based on the ongoing piloting of the approach in three river basins in Malaysia, Thailand and Viet Nam. The framework will aim at promoting investment to improve agricultural water productivity and coping with water scarcity. FAO could also collaborate with the ASEAN Secretariat under an operational regional project focusing on water allocation policies and mechanisms — to develop a regional initiative with the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) on revitalizing irrigation and agricultural water management through capacity-building for modernization of irrigation systems, and to develop, in cooperation with ESCAP, a system for monitoring investments and results in the water sector.

**ILO**

ILO is working with ASEAN member States to address the social impact of rising food prices and to promote labour productivity growth in agriculture which is essential for both food security and poverty reduction. Between July and October 2008, a joint ILO-UNICEF-UNESCO-WFP research study examining the impact of rising food prices on child labour and education in selected ASEAN countries led to the development of draft policy recommendations. The feasibility of the recommendations has been tested through local, provincial and national workshops in Cambodia and the Lao People’s Democratic Republic. ILO is now drafting a policy brief on ‘Guidance for mitigating the social impact of crisis in Asia’ for the use of practitioners and policy makers. In order to increase labour productivity in agriculture and rural areas, ILO supports local development initiatives in several ASEAN countries. Together with OECD and the ASEAN Secretariat, it organized an expert meeting on ‘Fostering local employment and skills development in Indonesia and the Philippines’ in December 2008 in Jakarta.
United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

The UNCCD secretariat has been working with ASEAN member countries to address land degradation issues, such as loss of soil fertility, reduction in land productivity, soil erosion, mitigation of drought effect, loss of biodiversity and other associated problems. In 2005, in Bin Thuan, Viet Nam, ASEAN experts formulated the South-East Asia Subregional Action Programme for Combating Land Degradation and Eradicating Poverty in Drought Prone, Seasonally Arid and Food Insecure Areas. With the cooperation of member countries, the UNCCD secretariat has been facilitating the implementation of this programme in three areas: geo-informatics development for land degradation control and sustainable land and integrated ecosystem management; crosscutting programme areas on information network, exchange and transfer of science, technology and traditional knowledge; and capacity-building and community empowerment.

Under a new strategy, UNCCD will help country parties to mitigate further desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of UNCCD’s New Strategic Objectives to improve the livelihood of affected population; improve the productivity of affected ecosystems; c) generate global benefits; and d) mobilize resources to support implementation of the Convention by effective partnerships-building between national and international actors.

Its operational objectives consist of advocacy, awareness raising and education; policy framework development; c) science, technology and knowledge sharing; capacity-building; and financing and technology transfer. UNCCD will also assist ASEAN countries to align their National Action Programmes to Mitigate Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought and Subregional Action Programme in the coming years.  

UNOPS

UNOPS has extensive experience in supervising and facilitating integrated rural development projects aimed at food security and poverty alleviation in the ASEAN region, particularly in Viet Nam, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Cambodia, Indonesia and the Philippines. The unique feature of many of these projects, particularly those funded by the International Fund for Agriculture Development, has been that the funds were channeled through the recipient government’s systems to ensure country ownership while maintaining the support and oversight of UNOPS. These projects covered a wide range of sectors, including infrastructure development, irrigation and agriculture development, water supply and sanitation, rural healthcare, gender development and micro finance. The continuing need for rural development and poverty alleviation in some countries in the ASEAN region indicates the future potential for UNOPS to assist these countries.

UNDP

UNDP supports international development initiatives for poverty reduction and achievement of the MDGs.Achieving MDG 1 of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger complements the Five Rome Principles for Sustainable Global Food Security contained in the Declaration of the Rome World Summit on Food Security 2009 (FAO, 2009). The recently concluded 65th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2010 reinforced international commitments for action to meet, by 2015, the targets under MDG 1 by pursuing strategies to address the root causes of extreme poverty and hunger, improving opportunities among youth for productive employment and decent work, promoting comprehensive systems of social protection, increasing efforts to mitigate the socio-economic impacts of multiple crises, fostering effective partnerships, and strengthening international coordination and governance for securing access to food for all (United Nations, 2010). Food security includes, and goes beyond, the production and availability of food. Access to nutrition through markets, social protection and knowledge continues to be uncertain in many countries. Asia is home to persisting and emerging pockets of extreme poverty and hunger, while simultaneously being a high growth region globally.

UNDP can complement support from FAO and WFP to support ASEAN in promoting inclusive, equitable and sustained economic growth while addressing multiple dimensions of poverty and hunger.

WFP

Given clear relevance to its core mandate, WFP has been a very active participant in regional interaction on food security. For example, the Programme continues to pursue national and regional initiatives related to the ASEAN Plus Three Rice Reserve and the ASEAN Food Security Information System. Sharing of expertise and best practices in vulnerability analysis is a key focal area for future technical collaboration with ASEAN. The WFP-FAO co-lead of the Global Food Security Cluster will result in expanded and deeper interaction with ASEAN.

21 www.unccd.int/cop/officialdocs/cop9
Health systems

For many member countries of ASEAN, annual per capita investment in health care – from both public and private sources – is among the lowest in the world. Seven of the 10 ASEAN countries invest less than $40 per capita annually. Delivering a reasonable basic package of health services requires a minimum of $60 per capita (ESCAP, 2007a).

Low investment in health care undermines the availability and quality of services. Underinvestment also contributes to low ratios of medical personnel to population. In South-East Asia, there are around 5 physicians per 10,000 population – compared with 16 in the Republic of Korea and 20 in Japan. A similar shortage exists for nursing and midwifery personnel.

To offset low public expenditure, people in most ASEAN countries have to spend a lot of their own money on health care. In five of the poorer/less affluent countries, more than 60 per cent of total health spending comes from household out-of-pocket payments – a rate significantly higher than the global average of 23 per cent. This undermines the health and well-being of the poor, not only discouraging them from accessing much-needed care, but also at times plunging them deeper into poverty.

In April 2000, the ASEAN Ministers of Health met in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and envisaged that health would be at the centre of development by 2020. In 2004, the Vientiane Action Programme, endorsed at the 10th ASEAN Summit, included measures to integrate the ASEAN health-care sector through strengthening capacity and competitiveness in health-related products and services, harmonizing standards, and enhancing human resources for health. In addition to these developments, ASEAN would also need to facilitate the movement of health professionals – by establishing Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) and standardizing visa and work permit regulations for the full range of health professionals, and ensuring the full implementation of the MRAs.

All countries are also concerned about the health implications of climate change. These can include vector-borne diseases from rising temperatures; respiratory disorders exacerbated by greater use of fossil fuels; water and food-borne diseases; and malnutrition from disruption to food production and food security. Temperature increases have already contributed to a rise in the incidence of dengue fever. For instance, in Singapore, the mean annual temperature increased from 26.9 to 28.4 degrees centigrade over the period 1978-1998 and the number of dengue fever and dengue hemorrhagic fever cases rose more than ten-fold from 384 to 5,258 over the same period (WHO, 2007). ASEAN is well-endowed with resources, both natural and human. The key is for countries to work together to address the health risks from climate change with greater collective responsibility and attention to social justice.

ESCAP

ESCAP, through the Regional Meeting on Promoting Sustainable Social Protection Strategies to Improve Access to Health Care held in Bangkok in 2008, developed a range of practical recommendations that ASEAN member States can adopt in order to increase the fiscal space for spending on health care, and to strengthen current efforts to pool risk and provide financial protection to individuals and households.

FAO

Since the beginning of the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) crisis in 2004 in Asia, FAO has been collaborating closely with the ASEAN HPAI Task Force to support efforts to control this serious animal and human health threat. FAO manages a large portfolio of projects related to HPAI control in ASEAN countries and has assisted in building capacities on HPAI prevention and control in the poultry sector. The ASEAN Secretariat, with technical assistance from FAO and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), and funding from ADB, has organized workshops to discuss the technical components of HPAI control and prevention under the ASEAN Regional Framework for HPAI Control and Prevention. The workshops paved the way for the development of the first and second regional frameworks for HPAI control which have been endorsed by the ASEAN Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF).

Under the FAO/OIE Global Framework on the Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases, ASEAN is considered a regional specialized organization. Its centres on epidemiology and laboratory diagnosis would be coordinated under the framework. FAO plans to collaborate with the ASEAN Secretariat in providing support to ASEAN member States in capacity-building and implementing activities related to animal disease control and prevention. In particular, FAO will collaborate with ASEAN in improving the planning for control of transboundary animal diseases and highly pathogenic emerging diseases – through better understanding of disease risks and socio-economic factors along the supply chain at domestic and cross-border levels. In addition, long-term human resource improvement will be conducted to enable member States to deal with potential animal health problems. FAO also plans
to hold a consultative meeting next year on national and regional livestock sector policy framework(s) to enhance the contribution of livestock in economic development in the ASEAN region.

**ICAO**

ICAO has facilitated coordination between the aviation and public health sectors at the individual ASEAN member State level, for example, under its Cooperative Arrangement for the Prevention of Spread of Communicable Disease through Air Travel (CAPSCA) project. The project has been effective in facilitating the successful development and implementation of public health emergency preparedness planning, especially in implementation of WHO's International Health Regulations (IHR) of 2005 at points of entry at ASEAN international airports. In line with the project’s aims to strengthen communications and coordination, the ICAO Regional Office recently participated in and supported the ASEAN co-sponsored event ‘Southeast Asia Regional Multisectoral Pandemic Preparedness and Response (PPR) Table Top Exercise: Managing the Impacts of Pandemics on Societies, Governments and Organizations’ in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in August 2010. The objective of the exercise was to improve the multisectoral, whole of society, capabilities of ASEAN member States, both individually and collectively, to prepare for and respond to a severe pandemic with potentially devastating effects on the region.

**ILO**

ILO has cooperated with ASEAN on occupational safety and health (OSH). The ASEAN Occupational Safety and Health Network (ASEAN-OSHNET) provides a forum for mutual support and cooperation on a range of subjects, such as advancing national OSH programmes in line with the ILO Promotional Framework for OSH Convention, 2006; strengthening national OSH systems (legislative frameworks, inspection, and injury reporting systems); addressing emerging issues like asbestos, pandemic influenza (H1N1) and green jobs; extending OSH protection to small enterprises, and informal and rural workplaces; and developing joint publications, for example, ‘The ASEAN Occupational Safety and Health Network: Good Occupational Safety and Health Practices 2008/2009’.

**UNFPA**

UNFPA helps increase ASEAN’s capacity to monitor sub-national inequities in reaching reproductive health targets, particularly within underserved groups, such as the poor, migrants and youth, as well as remote rural, ethnic minorities and other socially vulnerable groups. It co-chairs the United Nations Asia-Pacific RCM’s Thematic Working Group on Health with WHO where regional and country-specific issues are discussed. UNFPA supports health system strengthening for maternal health through human resources development and improved systems for delivery of emergency obstetric and neonatal care and family planning; reproductive health commodity security, focusing on strengthening the logistics systems and supplies of critical reproductive health commodities in member countries; and the integration of services by strengthening linkages between reproductive health and HIV services. It is also involved in advocating, through regional and national parliamentary forums, increased allocations for maternal health and the right to maternal health.

**UNICEF**

UNICEF and ASEAN have collaborated with one another since 1991 within the biennial Ministerial Consultation on Children which is an important forum to address a wide range of children’s issues. Reinforced by UNICEF’s country programmes, these Consultations have resulted in significant progress in ASEAN’s achievement of child-related MDGs. UNICEF will work with ASEAN regional and national bodies to address emerging threats that impact negatively on children, for example, the food and economic crises, and climate change that is resulting in the emergence of new diseases like avian influenza and malaria. It will also continue to work with ASEAN to monitor the situation of children in ASEAN member States in the context of UNICEF’s December 2007 Report to ASEAN on ‘Situation Review of Children in ASEAN’, and discuss ways to address identified challenges.

**UNOPS**

UNOPS has extensive experience in the health sector, including the procurement of pharmaceuticals, medical equipment and ambulances; the construction and rehabilitation of hospitals, clinics, laboratories and warehousing facilities; partnering with global supply chain management providers and designing service packages for governments; fund management support; and national capacity development. Knowing the operational issues related to public health systems well, UNOPS can assist in addressing health risks in the ASEAN region.
WHO

WHO-ASEAN collaboration can be traced back to 1979 and it has been covered by a series of MoUs on prevention and control of specific communicable diseases, with emphasis on malaria, dengue hemorrhagic fever and other vectorborne diseases, vaccine-preventable diseases and the poliomyelitis eradication, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, hepatitis, and meningococcal meningitis. The two have also collaborated on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, environmental health, provision of essential drugs, and nutrition, health promotion and human resource development. A new MoU to span 10 years (2009-2018) is expected to be signed before the end of the year, following a high-level review of WHO-ASEAN cooperation in July 2008. This will focus on: prevention and control of communicable and non-communicable diseases; health systems strengthening; food security, food safety and nutrition; health effects of climate change and the environment; emergency preparedness and response; globalization and trade and their impact on health; and traditional medicine.

HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS prevention efforts in the ASEAN region need further scaling up if countries are to successfully reduce the number of new infections. Scaling up of high-impact prevention services is often impeded by counter-productive laws and policies that stigmatize and criminalize populations who are most at risk. ASEAN Governments could do more to converge on reviewing and repealing laws that obstruct the rollout of condom promotion, oral substitution, and needle and syringe exchange programmes. Initiatives to foster cooperation between the public security and public health sectors need further encouragement across the ASEAN region. Unless funding for AIDS response is made an integral part of national health expenditure as a long-term development priority, it is likely to stay as a crisis response.

ILO

ILO assisted the establishment of the first group of HIV/AIDS focal points of ASEAN Ministries of Labour and facilitated their interaction with the ASEAN Task Force on AIDS. In 2007, it worked with the HIV/AIDS Focal Points to draft the ‘Essential Workplace Action for the Prevention and Management of HIV and AIDS’ in ASEAN member Countries.

UNAIDS

UNAIDS started cooperating with the ASEAN Secretariat in 1997 when the first ASEAN Medium-Term Work Programme on HIV/AIDS was prepared. It has since focused on issues that require an intercountry approach. The work, carried out under six Letters of Agreement (LoAs), has helped ASEAN prepare for its First and Second Summits on HIV and AIDS in 2001 and 2007, and supported operationalization of the declarations into prioritized work plans which include support for a staff position dedicated to servicing the ASEAN Task Force on AIDS.

UNAIDS’ collaboration with ASEAN is guided by existing agreements, such as the Joint Communiqué of the Second ASEAN-United Nations Summit in 2005 and the commitments on HIV and AIDS adopted by the ASEAN Summit in Cebu in January 2007. Planned collaboration focuses on building regional capacity for developing national strategies which are costed and evidence-informed, and addresses scaling up of prevention services for key populations at-risk; securing increased resources for HIV prevention, treatment and care; fostering cooperation between public health and public security sectors to create an enabling environment for prevention; supporting experience-sharing among National AIDS Commissions; and promoting exchange of expertise among member States in the spirit of South-South collaboration.

In 2010, UNAIDS is working with ASEAN member States to address barriers to HIV prevention, treatment and care — especially those related to stigma, discrimination, punitive laws and social justice — as requested by ASEAN Health Ministers in their meeting with the UNAIDS Executive Director in May 2009. The UNAIDS Secretariat supported the ASEAN Secretariat in preparing the first ever ASEAN regional UNGASS22 report, the analysis of which will feed into efforts to develop a fourth ASEAN Work Programme on HIV and AIDS (2011-2015) to address regional gaps and challenges.

UNDP

UNDP has worked very closely with the Health and Communicable Diseases Division of the Cross Sectoral Cooperation Directorate in the ASEAN Secretariat since late 2006. Its formal engagement has been through an LoA to support ASEAN’s third Work Programme on HIV/AIDS (2006-2010) and the ASEAN Task Force on AIDS (ATFOA).

22 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS

The Session adopted the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS which agreed to set targets for a wide range actions.
UNDP’s work has included the promotion of migrants’ right to health care and HIV services through a coordinated and multisectoral regional approach in the ASEAN region. A joint publication on HIV/AIDS and mobility was launched at the ASEAN Secretariat in 2008. A high level meeting was jointly convened in 2009, involving various government groups from ASEAN member States. Recommendations from the meeting include encouragement and support to governments to review policies, laws and practices related to HIV-specific restrictions on entry, stay and residence, and to ensure people living with HIV are no longer excluded, detained or deported on the basis of HIV status.

A second area of UNDP’s focus is supporting initiatives on the greater involvement of people living with HIV. In 2008, a meeting of positive people and representatives of national AIDS programmes from all ASEAN member countries was convened in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, leading to ‘The Vientiane Statement of Commitment on the Greater Involvement and Empowerment of People Living with HIV’, which is the first official ASEAN document on the subject (http://www.aseansec.org/21863.pdf).

The third and emerging area of work with the ASEAN Secretariat is on HIV, human rights and sexual diversity. In 2009, UNDP and ASEAN partnered with WHO, UNESCO, UNAIDS, USAID and the Asia Pacific Coalition on Male Sexual Health (APCOM) to convene a regional consultation on government and community responses to HIV among men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender persons. The consultation produced a regional framework to guide national responses and identify key, rights-based interventions in the areas of prevention, treatment, care and support, enabling environment and strategic information. Government and community representative from ASEAN member States, and from China, India and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) participated. In 2010, UNDP and, USAID, along with UNAIDS and WHO, responded to the recommendations by utilizing the framework to review and strengthen city level responses to HIV among men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender persons. The consultation produced a regional framework to guide national responses and identify key, rights-based interventions in the areas of prevention, treatment, care and support, enabling environment and strategic information. Government and community representative from ASEAN member States, and from China, India and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) participated. In 2010, UNDP and, USAID, along with UNAIDS and WHO, responded to the recommendations by utilizing the framework to review and strengthen city level responses to HIV among men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender persons. The consultation produced a regional framework to guide national responses and identify key, rights-based interventions in the areas of prevention, treatment, care and support, enabling environment and strategic information. Government and community representative from ASEAN member States, and from China, India and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) participated. In 2010, UNDP and, USAID, along with UNAIDS and WHO, responded to the recommendations by utilizing the framework to review and strengthen city level responses to HIV among men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender persons.

UNFPA

UNFPA is contributing to ASEAN achievement of MDG 6 through the prevention of HIV, with a focus on out-of-school young people, and most-at-risk groups, such as sex workers, clients and their partners. The UNFPA technical team in South-East Asia worked with ASEAN’s ATFOA in the developing the second and third ASEAN Work Programmes on HIV/AIDS. UNFPA also provided technical assistance in the preparation of the 12th ASEAN Summit’s special session on HIV and AIDS through the ASEAN Inter-Country Consultation, and to the 14th ATFOA meeting in July 2008 in Singapore.

Education

South-East Asia has made significant progress in meeting the Education for All (EFA) goals and the education targets of the MDGs. In particular, it has taken major strides towards providing access to primary education. However, as most countries have acknowledged, it will be difficult to reach the remaining 10 to 20 per cent of the children who are not in school. It is also important to improve the quality of education — although children are in school, they may not be learning well, and either repeat grades or decide to drop out of school. Many countries also lack the resources to build or expand schools, or to improve learning materials and ensure sufficient qualified teachers are available where they are needed. Furthermore, although ASEAN countries have made significant gender parity progress on core EFA indicators, especially in primary and secondary enrolment, over the past

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23 Chengdu and Hong Kong are also included in this project.

24 UNIFEM is a part of United Nations Women.
two decades, achieving gender equality in education remains a challenge. For progress on this, action is required to address social exclusion, and to alter gender socialization processes and certain learning conditions.

ILO

ILO has cooperated with ASEAN on human resources and skills development. It has supported a number of ASEAN skills development initiatives, such as recent meetings on public private partnerships and qualification frameworks. It also supported preparations for and conduct of the ASEAN Human Resources Conference in May 2010 in Ha Noi which prepared a draft ASEAN Leaders Joint Statement on Human Resources for Economic Recovery and Skills Development for Economic Recovery and Growth. The Statement is scheduled for consideration at the 17th ASEAN Summit in October 2010.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Since the 2008 EFA Mid-Term Policy Review for Southeast Asia and the Southeast Asia Education Ministers’ Meeting, UNESCO and SEAMEO have been collaborating on developing strategies and projects that ASEAN member States could undertake jointly to help them achieve EFA goals and education-related MDGs by 2015. At a subsequent meeting organized in collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat, EFA partners, such as UNICEF and ILO, assisted in drafting a number of regional project proposals to target the unreached, disadvantaged and underserved groups in education. As co-chair of the United Nations Asia-Pacific RCM’s Thematic Working Group on EFA, UNESCO will continue to mobilize EFA partners to work with SEAMEO and the ASEAN Secretariat to provide ASEAN member States concrete implementation support. It will also intensify efforts to achieve EFA in the face of the global economic crisis as indicated in the joint statement issued by the EFA convening agencies (UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and World Bank) in April 2009. Recognizing close cooperation with partners is important in addressing other challenges facing the region — financial and economic crises, climate change, natural disasters, migration, human trafficking, information and technological gap —, UNESCO and ASEAN will sign a new framework for cooperation in 2010 with a concrete joint programme of action for 2011-2015.

UNICEF

UNICEF is a key partner in the work being conducted by SEAMEO on bilingual education, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in Schools, and multigrade education. It is invited to address the Ministers of Education from the eleven SEAMEO member countries at their annual gatherings which reflects its established close working relationship with them.

Gender equality

Achieving gender equality implies not only the advancement of women but also tackling the underlying reasons for gender inequality. Increased coordination by the United Nations Asia-Pacific RCM members and stakeholders to promote gender-responsive strategies for achieving the MDGs can help address prevailing gender disparities, and discrimination against women and girls in the region. In many countries, such disparities and discrimination have been even more pronounced among the poor, the disabled, the disadvantaged, ethnic minorities, internally displaced people and migrants, those affected by HIV/AIDS, and rural people. The Asia-Pacific RCM seeks to strengthen attention to gender as a key element of achieving all MDGs and to better coordinate the work of all RCM members.

ESCAP

ESCAP has a long history of facilitating and convening a range of stakeholders on gender and development issues, and the promotion of gender equality, to strengthen coordination and consistency in the approach to these issues. In collaboration with UNIFEM and other RCM members, it is ready to enhance cooperation with ASEAN in mainstreaming gender concerns in the promotion of economic and socio-cultural integration. This would support follow-up to the ASEAN High-level Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming, held in Jakarta in November 2006, which adopted the Joint Statement and Commitment to Implement Gender Mainstreaming. For example, ESCAP could pursue work on some common gender indicators, to which ASEAN could commit, to help track the advancement of women in the region.

ITU

ITU supported ASEAN in the conduct of a Study on the Dynamics of Women in the ICT Sector in ASEAN Countries. Training tools on the use of ICT to promote rural women’s livelihood were also developed by ITU in partnership with the Asia Pacific Women’s Information Network Center (APWINC) and with support from the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy, Government of Australia. The tools
comprise two main components: basic computer and Internet literacy training materials consisting of a Student Manual, an Instructor's Manual and an expandable Exercise Databank; and interactive customized training materials for the promotion of livelihood of women, focusing on farming. The tools are simple, easy to use and can be replicated with minimal changes. ITU successfully organized a fourth class municipality in December 2009 in the Philippines which is now being replicated in other parts of the country.

**UNDP**

Promoting gender equality and empowerment of women through gender mainstreaming is one of the strategic areas of UNDP’s work. Gender inequality is a global challenge flagged by the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995 and embedded in the MDGs. The Asia-Pacific Human Development Report on Gender, Power, Voice and Rights: A Turning Point for Gender Equality in Asia and the Pacific, prepared by UNDP in 2010, has drawn attention to the pressing need for continuing advocacy on gender equality, which is an important trigger for accelerating progress with MDGs and strengthening human development in the region (UNDP, 2010). UNDP’s dedicated Regional Gender Team could support ASEAN efforts towards gender equality and mainstreaming through strategic levers of positive change and concrete programming.

**UNICEF**

In spite of the achievement of gender parity in some areas, such as primary education, continuing gender inequity in all areas is a major obstacle to achieving the MDGs. Based on internal UNICEF consultations in November 2008, UNICEF is focusing, among others, on promoting and advocating high impact interventions to accelerate reductions in maternal and neonatal deaths through improved health, nutrition, and water, hygiene and sanitation. The emphasis is on ensuring a high coverage of continuum of care from pregnancy to childhood as recent evidence shows that the first 28 days of life is the period when most of child deaths occur.

**UNIFEM**

ASEAN and UNIFEM signed a Framework for Cooperation in 2006 to promote and implement the 1988 Declaration of the Advancement of Women and the 2004 Vientiane Action Programme. Under the Framework, the two have agreed to jointly carry out practical measures to eliminate violence and end discrimination against women. The measures include technical assistance, consultations, exchange and dissemination of information, research, advocacy and awareness raising.

UNIFEM has been providing technical assistance to implement the operational plan of the ASEAN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in ASEAN under the aegis of the ACW. It has also been supporting capacity development of ASEAN member States to deepen gender mainstreaming, positing links between the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action and the MDGs, and promoting women’s political participation. Efforts to share good practices and strengthen the capacity of ASEAN member States include gender mainstreaming; services on violence against women; making the linkage between violence against women and HIV in policy and services; prevention of spousal transmission of HIV; and the formulation of gender equality and domestic violence legislation.

UNIFEM has also been providing technical support to the process of establishing an ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children, and to engendering the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, including facilitation of the dialogue between ASEAN and civil society groups. It is committed to continue working on all pillars of ASEAN to promote a gender equal ASEAN Community.

**UNFPA**

Universal access to reproductive health contributes significantly to reducing maternal mortality. UNFPA is supporting South-South collaboration within ASEAN countries in reproductive health, gender and population ageing. It is working with Cambodia, Indonesia, the The Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, the Philippines and Viet Nam to ensure the provision of skilled attendants at birth, and to improve access to emergency obstetric care for all women with complications in pregnancy. It is also supporting interventions to reduce financial barriers to accessing maternal health services.

UNFPA partnerships in the ASEAN region focus on reducing unwanted pregnancies by meeting the need for family planning, access to antenatal care and reducing the adolescent birth rate. Furthermore, UNFPA is working on improving maternal health and decreasing child marriage and other harmful practices by addressing gender and socio-cultural issues. It has been working with ASEAN member countries on reducing sexual transmission of

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25 UNIFEM is a part of United Nations Women.

26 General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

27 Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.
HIV in sex work, casual and stable relationships. Comprehensive interventions to reduce mother to child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV with male involvement have been strengthened in Thailand. UNFPA is also supporting countries to strengthen health sector response to gender-based violence.

**Human rights and governance**

The ASEAN Charter lists an important set of norms for the organization, such as adherence to the rule of law, good governance, principles of democracy and constitutional government, respect for fundamental freedoms, promotion and protection of human rights, and promotion of social justice. ASEAN’s commitment to promote and protect human rights through regional cooperation is reflected in the Preamble, Purposes and Principles of the ASEAN Charter.

Article 14 of the Charter calls for the creation of a human rights body. A high level panel was subsequently set up to draft the terms of reference for such a body. It has held consultations with stakeholders, including the (informal) Working Group for an ASEAN human rights mechanism, the Network of Four National Human Rights Institutions, the Solidarity for Asian People’s Advocacy (SAPA) and the Women’s Caucus for the ASEAN Human Rights Body. The panel visited Geneva in 2009 to learn about human rights issues at the international level from the United Nations Human Rights Council and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Following the endorsement of the terms of reference by ASEAN’s foreign ministers in July 2009, the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) was launched on 23 October 2009 during the 15th ASEAN Summit. AICHR is the first regional human rights mechanism to be established in Asia. (Chalermpalanupap, 2008b).

In addition to the establishment of AICHR, other developments have been taking place on the establishment of human rights mechanisms and instruments. On 7 April 2010, the ASEAN Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC) was inaugurated in Ha Noi, Viet Nam. The drafting of an ASEAN instrument on the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers is ongoing. With long experience in promoting and protecting human rights, the United Nations is in a strong position to assist these efforts, including through facilitation of regional and interregional knowledge and experience sharing on promoting and protecting human rights. Good governance is undermined by challenges posed by organized criminal activity which transcends borders. These range from trafficking in drugs, humans, forest products and protected wildlife to migrant smuggling and money laundering. Organized crime is a major contributor to corruption. South-East Asia is a major source for human trafficking and a global centre for the manufacture, trafficking and consumption of amphetamine-type stimulants. It remains the world’s second largest source of heroin. Illicit drug production, trafficking and use, which facilitate the spread of HIV/AIDS, damage the social fabric of ASEAN communities. An important part of the ASEAN response to these challenges will come through effective application of the rule of law. The rule of law forms the basis for the promotion of security and justice, and it underpins the attainment of all MDGs. Foreign Ministers at the 31st ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in July 1998 signed the Joint Declaration for a Drug-Free ASEAN by 2020 which affirmed ASEAN’s commitment to eradicating illicit drug production, processing, trafficking and abuse. The 33rd ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in July 2000 reiterated concern over the threat from the manufacturing, trafficking and abuse of illegal drugs to the security and stability of the ASEAN region, and agreed to advance the target year for realizing a Drug-Free ASEAN to 2015.

**ILO**

Elimination of the worst forms of child labour by the global target year of 2016 has been an area of ILO-ASEAN cooperation in 2009-2010. With nine out of the 10 ASEAN member States having ratified ILO Convention No. 182 on this theme, and all 10 ASEAN member States having ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the ILO-ASEAN cooperation has focused on the development of a roadmap, for both ASEAN as a regional body and its individual member States, to meet the 2016 target.

ILO prepared a background paper with suggestions for elements of the roadmap to help discussions among ASEAN members. An experts’ meeting of workers, employers, governments, policy advisors and academics from selected ASEAN countries was held in April 2010 in Jakarta to discuss the suggestions. Based on feedback received from the meeting, a draft roadmap was developed for further review and endorsement at a follow-up ASEAN tripartite meeting in Bangkok in June 2010.
The roadmap, currently in draft form, is expected to be finalized for submission to and adoption by the ASEAN Labour Ministers by the end of 2010.

**Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)**

Since the beginning of 2006, OHCHR's Regional Office for South-East Asia has supported the establishment of an ASEAN human rights system as one of its work priorities. This followed consultation with relevant governmental and non-governmental actors in the region, enabling OHCHR to develop a strategy and implement a series of activities that bring added value to the process. One of the its key approaches has been to bring experiences and lessons learned from Africa, the Americas and Europe to South-East Asia, based on the understanding that these regions have gone through the process of establishing credible and effective regional human rights mechanisms, and these experiences can help to inform the process within ASEAN.

OHCHR organized a series of workshops to increase awareness of existing regional human rights systems, featuring experts from Africa, the Americas and Europe who shared experiences and best practices. The first of these workshops was held in Bangkok in February 2007 and was attended by a variety of governmental and non-governmental actors, including the ASEAN Secretariat, the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand, the Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism, and Forum-Asia. In April 2009, OHCHR organized a workshop on regional human rights mechanisms in Geneva with the members of the High Level Panel responsible for drafting the terms of reference of the ASEAN human rights body. In May 2009, it collaborated with the civil society SAPA Task Force on ASEAN and Human Rights in organizing a workshop in Jakarta for key civil society groups from the region, bringing experiences on civil society advocacy from Africa, the Americas and Europe. OHCHR has also provided technical assistance to relevant actors in the region. For instance, in 2008 it drafted a non-paper entitled ‘Principles for Regional Human Rights Mechanisms’, which has been used as a resource by both governmental and non-governmental actors.

Upcoming activities include a joint OHCHR-UNDP workshop with the ASEAN Secretariat on the provision of secretariat support to regional human rights mechanisms, with relevant experts again being brought to South-East Asia from other regions of the world.

**UNDP**

UNDP’s mandate includes the mainstreaming of human rights within development processes and strengthening countries’ engagement with the international human rights machinery with a capacity development rather than a monitoring lens.

In September 2010, UNDP’s Asia Pacific Regional Centre and OHCHR’s Regional Office for South-East Asia jointly organized a Regional Dialogue on United Nations Engagement with the ASEAN Human Rights System in Bangkok. This was the first occasion that senior United Nations staff from across the region came together to consider the emerging ASEAN human rights system and how the United Nations could engage with and support it at the national and regional levels. Resource persons for the event included members of AICHR and ACWC, and representatives of the ASEAN Secretariat and key civil society groups.

Previous UNDP regional initiatives in this area include a partnership with the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (APF) and OHCHR’s National Institutions Unit to carry out capacity assessments of National Human Rights Institutions. These are self-assessments facilitated by the partners to help an institution to reflect on its existing and desired capacities and to provide practical recommendations on how to address possible gaps. UNDP, through its regional presence and its country offices, has a network of professionals in all areas of governance — including lawyers and judges, parliamentarians and anti-corruption bodies — that can be leveraged to support national and regional bodies.

UNDP’s regional programme on Indigenous Peoples’ Rights and Development (RIPP) provides a regional platform for dialogue on the issue. In 2008, RIPP participated in an Indigenous Peoples’ Strategy Planning Workshop on the Establishment of an ASEAN Human Rights Body, organized by Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP). This Workshop brought together indigenous peoples’ organizations, leaders and experts from ASEAN countries to develop advocacy strategies and to engage in the ASEAN process, especially in the establishment of the AICHR. This was followed up by participation in the consultations on AICHR involving indigenous peoples’ organisations and other NGOs which decided on future strategic collective engagement with AICHR within ASEAN mechanisms.
UNICEF

A whole generation of ASEAN children has grown up since world leaders adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. All 10 ASEAN member States have ratified the Convention, started to build stronger legal and policy frameworks and institutions to deal with children’s issues, and taken large strides in combating child deaths. Mortality for under-fives is now half what it had been in 1990 (UNICEF, 2007). ASEAN Leaders have also committed themselves to the MDGs and UNICEF’s World Fit for Children. Since ASEAN’s Commitment for Children in 2001, there has been a series of Declarations on Cooperation in Youth Development Programmes and the Cebu Declaration on ‘One Caring and Sharing Community’ – all of which UNICEF supports.

UNICEF’s support to ASEAN’s work on human rights includes providing information on and analysis of other regional human rights mechanisms relating to children, and analyzing progress on child rights by ASEAN member States, including support to member States in reporting to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child Committee and in implementing the subsequent recommendations. UNICEF has supported the development of the Strategic Framework 2011-2015 of ASEAN’s Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development (SOMSWD) for the Enhancement of Social Welfare & Development for Women and Children. It has also helped draft the ASEAN declaration ‘ASEAN Women and Children: From the Vision to Action’ and facilitated the ASEAN Senior Officials Meetings on Youth.

In 2009-2010, ASEAN and UNICEF developed a Framework of Cooperation that, when signed, will facilitate stronger cooperation in the achievement of child-related MDGs with equity, especially MDG 1 (target on reducing child malnutrition), MDG 4 (reducing child mortality), MDG 5 (reducing maternal mortality), and MDG 6 (target on combating HIV/AIDS through prevention of mother to child transmission and paediatric treatment). Other areas of cooperation will include promoting information sharing and technical cooperation on health and social welfare, and strengthening the capacity and supporting the work of the ACWC.

UNIFEM

ASEAN and UNIFEM have agreed under their Framework for Cooperation to jointly develop and carry out practical measures to eliminate violence and end discrimination against women in the ASEAN region. UNIFEM has provided technical assistance to ACW in implementing the operational plan of the ASEAN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and in the development of the ASEAN Declaration on Enhancing Social Welfare of ASEAN Women and Children, which is currently under consideration by ASEAN member States.

UNIFEM initiated a three-year project in 2010 to support the strengthening of AICHR and ACWC to protect and promote women’s rights. The project aims to assist AICHR and ACWC representatives in fulfilling their mandates, and includes capacity-building support and technical assistance on thematic issues, and on institution building. The project is assisting the development of a dialogue mechanism between national and regional women’s groups and AICHR and ACWC representatives. UNIFEM’s main focus is on supporting ASEAN in upholding the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which all ASEAN member States are party to.

UNIFEM also cooperated with ASEAN in the establishment of ACWC. This included support to a 2008 meeting of ACW and SOMSWD which relaunched the process of ACWC’s establishment, providing technical support to the working group which drafted ACWC’s terms of reference on international human rights mechanisms and on the experiences of other regional mechanisms dealing with women’s rights. UNIFEM also facilitated the participation of women’s groups in the development of the terms of reference of AICHR.

UNHCR

UNHCR will work to strengthen collaboration with ASEAN, particularly with its newly established human rights mechanisms, including AICHR and ACWC. With the weak legal framework currently existing in the region to protect refugees and stateless persons, UNHCR will provide support and expertise on specific human rights issues related to forced displacement, especially as they affect refugee women and refugee children, and to statelessness.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

UNODC leads the United Nations response to organized crime, drugs, human trafficking and terrorism. To promote more effective ASEAN application of the rule of law, UNODC could facilitate the implementation of relevant international legal instruments, and promote effective, fair and humane criminal justice systems through the use and application of United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice.
could also strengthen cooperation with ASEAN to build technical expertise that would enable ASEAN to enhance its knowledge of trends and impact assessment in drugs and crime. Other areas in which UNODC could support ASEAN include the reduction of opportunities for illicit activities and gains, through sustainable alternative development, reduction of drug abuse, HIV/AIDS (as related to injecting drug abuse, prison settings and human trafficking), criminal activity and victimization.

In October 2000, under the auspices of UNODC and in collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat and China, regional stakeholders gathered in Bangkok at the International Congress ‘In Pursuit of a Drug-Free ASEAN and China 2015’ (UNODC, 2007). One result of the Congress was a regional framework — the ASEAN and China Cooperative Operations in Response to Dangerous Drugs (ACCORD) Plan of Action — which was endorsed by ECOSOC. ACCORD was intended to outline specific actions guided by a cooperative framework for the benefit of all drug control stakeholders in the region. In April 2003, the ASEAN Secretariat and UNODC signed an MoU on Drug Control and Crime Prevention Cooperation to facilitate and support both parties in addressing the interrelated issues of drug control and crime prevention through joint technical cooperation projects and programmes.

Data collection, monitoring and review

At their fourth Informal Summit in Singapore in 2000, ASEAN leaders introduced the idea of a ‘score card’ to keep track of the implementation of the numerous regional initiatives. In 2008, the ASEAN Community Progress Monitoring System (ACPPS) was developed (ASEAN, 2008). This included a framework to measure advancement towards an ASEAN Economic Community and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, as well as data to show the progress between 2003 and 2005. The report emphasized the importance of data comparability and availability for monitoring. ASEAN plans to improve the system for monitoring progress towards the ASEAN Community 2015, with a focus on narrowing the development gaps among member States.

ASEAN is also developing published outputs to disseminate and communicate statistics that can be used for understanding the progress in its integration. This includes enhancing the ASEAN Statistical Indicators and improving the ASEAN Statistical Yearbook. It is exploring further statistical work in support of monitoring the achievement of MDGs in the region (ASEAN, 2009d) as well as MDG-related initiatives set out in the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint and Initiatives for ASEAN Integration Work Programme.

A major issue in monitoring the implementation of regional initiatives and progress towards the MDGs and other development goals is the availability of comparable data between countries and over time. Large gaps remain in the availability of data on some key indicators in ASEAN member States, particularly in the poorest ones. This reflects the low capacity of national statistical systems to produce reliable and timely data even for the most basic statistics (ESCAP, 2007). Weak statistical systems and inadequate use of statistical information by policymakers in these countries create a vicious circle that generates poor policy decisions and poor development outcomes.

Capacity-building is among the major thrusts of regional cooperation and integration of statistics among ASEAN member States through such mechanisms as the ASEAN Heads of Statistical Offices Meeting (AHSOM). AHSOM is set to adopt an enhanced ASEAN Framework of Cooperation in Statistics that will officially establish the ASEAN Community Statistical System (ACSS), which is envisioned to respond to increased and more diverse demands for statistics in the implementation of the ASEAN Charter and the Roadmap for the ASEAN Community 2015. The purpose of ACSS is to ensure the supply of timely, comparable, relevant and high quality official statistics in support of evidence-based and sound policy making and monitoring.

In support of information needs in establishing AEC, ASEAN has been pursuing the harmonization of statistics in key areas, such as international merchandise trade, international trade in services and foreign direct investment. It has been building a transport and logistics statistical database through the ASEAN-Japan Transport Platform project. ASEAN is considering regional cooperation on the System of National Accounts (SNA), population statistics, and poverty and related indicators.

ASEAN has been active in adopting and promoting international statistical standards and good practices. It has promoted and facilitated the implementation of SNA and endorsed the SNA development programme for ASEAN, set specific targets, established information sharing mechanisms, and provided relevant training. It has also adopted a work programme to launch the ASEAN Population Census Forum toward an agreement on common population statistics. Furthermore, it has conducted training on basic concepts and definitions on labour statistics based primarily on the decent work and
MDGs frameworks, with potential for technical cooperation in these areas.

**ESCAP**

The regional MDG partnership coordinated by ESCAP, together with ADB and UNDP, has been assisting the Asia-Pacific countries, including all the ten ASEAN member countries in tracking progress towards the MDGs, identifying the gaps, and closing these gaps through normative research, policy advocacy and capacity building. The periodic reports produced by the partnership have also been used by policy makers, development practitioners and other stakeholders to share their development experiences in closing the remaining gaps. The launch of the latest report on the sidelines of the 2010 United Nations Summit on MDGs was attended by several ASEAN senior policy makers. The partnership assisted the Government of Indonesia in organizing the Special Ministerial Meeting on MDGs in August 2010. ESCAP is also assisting in capacity-building for the formulation and implementation of MDGs-based national development strategies in the poorer ASEAN countries, such as Cambodia.

ESCAP is uniquely positioned to support ASEAN and its member States in monitoring regional integration and progress towards narrowing development gaps. Targeting primarily the producers of official statistics in national statistical systems, but also aiming to influence data users (including policy-makers), statistical capacity development by ESCAP can make a difference in the improvement of basic social, economic, demographic and environmental statistics in ASEAN member States, and in the development of new measurements and statistical standards required to address emerging policy issues.

ESCAP has supported national statistical capacity development in Asia and the Pacific — particularly in countries with the greatest needs — to collect, produce, disseminate and analyze data in accordance with internationally agreed standards and good practices. A good example of cooperation between ESCAP and ASEAN in this context is the active role played by the ASEAN Secretariat in the development of a regional programme for improving economic statistics. ESCAP's support for national statistical capacity development in the region also includes the targeted support to statistical development in Myanmar under broader capacity development programmes in collaboration with other multilateral and bilateral partners, and ongoing training provided by its Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP).

In collaboration with leading experts and organizations, ESCAP has been pushing forward the methodological frontier in such areas as informal sector and informal employment, disability, violence against women, and the production and use of disaggregated data. Such initiatives address pressing development policy issues by focusing on innovations in statistical measurement. ASEAN could facilitate the participation of its member countries in such development work.

ESCAP can support ASEAN in statistical information and analyses, including tracking progress in achieving the MDGs and understanding the social consequences of ASEAN economic integration. As a partner in a tripartite collaboration that includes UNDP and ADB, ESCAP has developed well-established and widely recognized methods for tracking MDGs progress (ESCAP, 2006a; ESCAP, UNDP and ADB, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2010a and 2010b). This not only involves the tracking of the progress of individual countries, but also of subregions and countries with special needs within Asia and the Pacific, as well as of other major regions for comparison. ESCAP can calculate ASEAN aggregates of MDGs progress and achievement, and expand the tracking methods to cover development outcomes besides those of the MDGs. It could also assist ASEAN in developing targets and indicators for the ASEAN MDG+ roadmap and conduct analyses to understand subnational disparities in MDGs achievements and other social and economic development outcomes.

Another area in which ASEAN and ESCAP could collaborate is the measurement of ICTs for development. As for other subregions, a huge ICT data gap exists for the ASEAN region. Within the ambit of the global partnership set up to close the gap, ASEAN and ESCAP can jointly facilitate the collection and processing of internationally comparable statistics on the information society at the national and subregional levels.

As ESCAP seeks to strengthen regional coordination in statistical development, it can work closely with ASEAN to avoid duplication and establish synergies. It is well-positioned to facilitate the implementation of international statistical standards, and to identify and share good practices in producing and using statistics. ASEAN, on its part, can contribute to the development and implementation of international statistical standards by linking up with global statistics development initiatives while addressing regional perspectives and country needs.

**ILO**

The ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific continues to support ASEAN member countries in monitoring the progress of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community by publishing the Labour and Social
Trends in ASEAN 2010 report. The report includes background analysis and policy recommendations for the discussion on human resources for economic recovery and development at the 2nd ASEAN Human Resource Conference in Ha Noi in May 2010. The report also explores the important role that education, training and skills development play in shaping the region’s recovery from the global economic and jobs crisis, competitiveness and longer-term development. A capacity-building workshop on labour market information and analysis was co-organized by the Department of Labour, Ministry of Home Affairs, Brunei Darussalam, the ASEAN Secretariat, the ADB Institute and ILO in Bandar Seri Begwan in March 2010.

**UNFPA**

UNFPA plays a lead operational role in helping to build national capacities for population data collection and analysis. A current focus of UNFPA support is the implementation of the 2010 round of population and housing censuses (2005-2014). The data collected will be crucial to measure progress toward achievement of the MDGs and to provide an evidence base that can guide national policy-making.

**New directions**

Partnerships that last are those that are constantly renewed, as the partners tackle tough problems together in a spirit of mutual respect and trust. As this study has shown, ASEAN and the United Nations have a long and varied experience of working together, whether on issues of security, or on economic and social development. While their progress has been more rapid in some areas than in others, the partnership as a whole has withstood the test of time and continued to mature over the years — to a point where trust and respect for one another is no longer at issue but rather it is the work at hand that steers the course of the relationship.

The challenges that lie ahead of ASEAN and the United Nations are many. They have been exacerbated by a series of successive setbacks in recent years, most prominently by the global financial and economic crisis of 2008. Although the global economy’s recovery from the crisis remains tentative, the Asia-Pacific region, of which ASEAN is a part, is at the vanguard of it. The need for deeper integration within ASEAN and, in turn, of ASEAN with the rest of Asia and the Pacific, has never been more pressing than now as the region marshals its strengths to emerge from the crisis more purposeful than before. The agenda for future cooperation between ASEAN and the United Nations is a demanding one as both organizations strive together for prosperity, equity, stability and peace — the defining cornerstones of inclusive development for all.
## Definitions and explanations of indicators as used in Figures II-1 to II-5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indicators measuring economic integration</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita</td>
<td>GDP per head calculated as the aggregate of production (GDP) divided by the population size, expressed in constant 1990 US dollars and in 2005 international PPP dollars. GDP: the total market value of all final goods and services produced within a country's borders in a given period of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central bank discount rate</td>
<td>The rate at which the central bank lends or discount eligible paper for deposit money to banks, typically reported on an end-of-period basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflation rate</td>
<td>The rate of increase of the level of prices during a given period. It is the percentage change of the consumer price index between two points of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange rate change</td>
<td>The average annual rate of change in the exchange rate of the national currency against the US dollar for the period indicated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour productivity</td>
<td>Output per unit of labour input. Output is measured in 1990 PPP dollars as value added (GDP), which is the total production value minus the value of intermediate inputs, such as raw materials, semi-finished products, services purchased and energy inputs. Labour input is defined as persons employed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own account workers</td>
<td>The number of own-account workers divided by the total employment, expressed as a percentage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment rate</td>
<td>The number of persons of working age who, during the reference period, were without work, currently available for work and seeking work, divided by the total labour force.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paved roads</td>
<td>The share of roads surfaced with crushed stone (macadam) and hydrocarbon binder or bituminized agents, concrete, or cobblestones, expressed as a percentage of the length of all roads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal computers</td>
<td>The number of personal computer divided by the population and multiplied by 100. Personal computers include PCs, laptops, notebooks, etc, but exclude terminals connected to mainframe and mini-computers that are primarily intended for shared use, and device such as smart-phones that have only some, but not all, of the function of a PC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet users</td>
<td>The total number of Internet users via fixed and mobile networks irrespective of the device used, expressed per 100 population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Fixed) Telephone lines</td>
<td>The number of fixed telephone lines divided by the population and multiplied by 100. Fixed telephone lines refer to telephone lines connecting a subscriber's terminal equipment to the public switched telephone network (PSTN) and which have a dedicated port on a telephone exchange.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cellular subscribers</td>
<td>The number of users of portable telephone subscribing to a public mobile telephone service using cellular technology, which provides access to the PSTN, expressed per 100 population.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under-5 mortality rate</td>
<td>The probability (expressed as a rate per 1,000 live births) of a child born in a specified year dying before reaching the age of five if subject to current age-specific mortality rates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children immunized</td>
<td>Proportion of 1 year-old children immunised against measles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underweight children</td>
<td>The percentage of children aged 0-59 months who fall below minus 2 standard deviations from the median weight for age of the international reference population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternal mortality ratio</td>
<td>The number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births during a specified period, usually 1 year. Maternal death is the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days after termination of pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management, but not from accidental or incidental causes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled birth attendance</td>
<td>The percentage of deliveries attended by personnel trained in providing life saving obstetric care, including giving the necessary supervision, care and advice to women during pregnancy, labour and the post-partum period; to conduct deliveries on their own; and to care for newborns (doctors, nurses or midwives).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV prevalence</td>
<td>The percentage of individuals living with HIV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TB prevalence</td>
<td>The number of cases of tuberculosis, all forms, per 100,000 population at a given point in time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TB death rate</td>
<td>The estimated number of deaths due to tuberculosis in a given time period. It is expressed as death per 100,000 population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOTS detection</td>
<td>Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course (DOTS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government health expenditure</td>
<td>The sum of outlays for health maintenance, restoration or enhancement paid for in cash or supplied in kind by government entities, such as the Ministry of Health, other ministries, parastatal organizations or social security agencies (without double counting government transfers to social security and extrabudgetary funds). It includes transfer payments to households to offset medical care costs and extrabudgetary funds to finance health services and goods. Government health expenditure is expressed as percentage of total government expenditure. General government expenditure corresponds to the consolidated outlays of all levels of government: territorial authorities, social security institutions and extrabudgetary funds, including capital outlays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy</td>
<td>The number of years a newborn infant would live if prevailing patterns of age-specific mortality rates at the time of birth were to stay the same throughout the child’s life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary enrolment (net)</td>
<td>Net enrollment ratio of primary education, or the number of pupils of the theoretical school-age group for primary education, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age-group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined gross enrolment</td>
<td>Gross enrollment ratio incorporating primary, secondary and tertiary education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender parity, primary</td>
<td>The ratio of gross enrolment ratio of primary education of females to that of males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender parity, secondary</td>
<td>The ratio of gross enrolment ratio of secondary education of females to that of males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender parity, tertiary</td>
<td>The ratio of gross enrolment ratio of tertiary education of females to that of males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult literacy rate</td>
<td>The proportion of literate persons among adult population, expressed as a percentage of population aged 15 years and above. Literacy is defined as the ability to read and write with understanding a simple statement related to one’s daily life. It generally encompasses basic arithmetic skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitation, rural</td>
<td>The proportion of rural population using an improved sanitation facility (including flush/pour flush toilet or latrine to: piped sewerage, septic tank or pit; a Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) latrine; a pit latrine with slab or composting toilet/latrine).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking water, rural</td>
<td>The proportion of rural population using improved drinking water sources (including household water connection, public standpipe, borehole, protected dug well, protected spring, rainwater collection and bottled water – if a secondary available source is also improved).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitation, urban</td>
<td>The proportion of urban population using an improved sanitation facility (including flush/pour flush toilet or latrine to: piped sewerage, septic tank or pit; a Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) latrine; a pit latrine with slab or composting toilet/latrine).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinking water, urban</td>
<td>The proportion of urban population using improved drinking water sources (including household water connection, public standpipe, borehole, protected dug well, protected spring, rainwater collection and bottled water – if a secondary available source is also improved).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO₂ emissions</td>
<td>The quantity of estimated CO₂ emissions divided by the total value of the GDP expressed in 2005 international PPP dollars. Estimates of total CO₂ emissions include anthropogenic emissions, less removal by sinks, of carbon dioxide (CO₂). The term “total” implies that emissions from all national activities are considered. The typical sectors for which CO₂ emission/removals are estimated are energy, industrial processes, agricultural, waste, and the sector of land use, and forestry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protected area</td>
<td>Proportion of terrestrial and marine areas protected, defined as the total land area dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means. Only protected area that are nationally designed are included in this indicator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy use</td>
<td>The kilogram of oil equivalent of energy use per capita. Energy use refers to use of primary energy before transformation to other end-use fuels, which is equal to indigenous production plus imports and stock changes, minus exports and fuels supplied to ships and aircraft engaged in international transport.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


ESCAP/CSD/6).


UNCTAD (2008). South-South Trade in Asia: the Role of Regional trade Agreements, Geneva: UNCTAD and JETRO.


United Nations Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism

Asian Development Bank (ADB)
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
International Labour Organization (ILO)
International Organization for Migration (IOM)
International Telecommunication Union (ITU)
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD)
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UNHABITAT)
United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)
United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR)
United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
United Nations University (UNU)
United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)
Universal Postal Union (UPU)
World Bank (WB)
World Health Organization (WHO)
ESCAP Series on
Inclusive & Sustainable Development: 3

Southeast Asia is home to a diverse fraternity of people and societies intermingling in an intriguing harmony that belies their differences. Much of this owes to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), one of the world’s more durable regional groupings, consisting of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam.

More than four decades after it was established, ASEAN is now renewing itself as an ‘ASEAN Community’, with a new charter that creates opportunities for a stronger and more cohesive organization, and a new mission seeking deeper integration among its member States, and with the rest of Asia and the Pacific. The imperatives for an ASEAN Community have become more pressing after the 2008 global financial and economic crisis with its far-reaching implications for the world economic and political order.

The United Nations has worked together with ASEAN in virtually all of its endeavours — establishment of a common market; regional connectivity; rights of migrant workers; disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response; environmental sustainability and climate change; food security; health systems; prevention and control of communicable diseases, including HIV/AIDS, education; gender equality; human rights and governance; and data collection, monitoring and review of key development indicators. This study is a contribution of the UN Asia-Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism, comprising 30 UN and affiliated entities, to the ASEAN-UN partnership. It highlights the remaining development gaps among ASEAN member States and the potential of the UN System to help close these gaps in the process of ASEAN’s integration.