

Activity 3

SCRIPT:

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on 8 August 1967, with five founding members — Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand — signing the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration). Brunei Darussalam joined ASEAN in 1984, followed by Vietnam in 1995, Myanmar and Laos in 1997 and Cambodia in 1999. ASEAN emphasizes regional cooperation in three "community pillars" of political and security cooperation, economic integration and socio-cultural cooperation. Through the three pillars, ASEAN aims to achieve regional integration by 2015, especially in economic integration.

ASEAN now has a Charter, which came into force in December 2008. The Charter provides ASEAN with a legal personality, and also provides for better coordinated and cohesive regional cooperation mechanisms. Under the Charter, ASEAN now has human rights bodies: the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children.

Regional cooperation is coordinated by community councils for each of the three communities: the ASEAN Political and Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community). Progress in implementation is reported to the ASEAN Heads of State/Government. The ASEAN leaders meet twice annually, in the country chairing ASEAN. ASEAN chairmanship rotates annually.

The Secretary-General of ASEAN facilitates and monitors the implementation of ASEAN agreements and decisions. He submits an annual report to the ASEAN Summit. He is appointed by the ASEAN Summit for a non-renewable term of office of five years, selected from among nationals of the ASEAN Member States based on alphabetical rotation. The Secretary-General of ASEAN for 2008 to 2012 is Dr. Surin Pitsuwan from Thailand. The Secretary-General is assisted in his work by the ASEAN Secretariat (based in Jakarta). The Secretariat's basic function is to provide for "greater efficiency in the coordination of ASEAN organs and for more effective implementation of ASEAN projects and activities".

ASEAN has ten Dialogue Partners (Australia, Canada, China, European Union, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Russia, United States) , and also has partnerships with the United Nations and several of its respective specialized agencies. ASEAN has held UN observer status since 2006.

(Source: Adapted from <http://www.aseanstudiescentre.org/> retrieved 17/2/2014)