

FACT SHEET

ASEAN COMMUNITY



one vision
one identity
one community

The ASEAN Community is anchored on three mutually supporting pillars: Political-Security, Economic, and Socio-Cultural. Established in 2015, it encapsulates ASEAN's resilience and dynamism in a journey spanning more than half a century, and how far and how well the ASEAN Member States have achieved in coming together as one Community.

It pursues the dream of ASEAN's founding fathers to improve the lives of Southeast Asian peoples through economic and cultural development, social progress, regional peace and security, collaboration, mutual assistance in training and research, improvement of living standards and cooperation with regional and international organisations. ASEAN recognises the importance of ensuring the safety of its citizens from challenges and threats such as climate change, pandemics, natural disasters and transnational crimes. It offers new opportunities to the region and the world by contributing to an atmosphere of peace and stability; of bigger, more open and rules-based market for business; of better health and education; and of sustainable development.

With the adoption of ASEAN Charter in 2007, ASEAN has built and strengthened its institutional frameworks for more effectiveness, greater efficiency, better synergy and coordination, paving the way for a rules-based and comprehensive institutional infrastructure in line with the needs of regional integration and community building.

Serving as the bedrock for peace and stability in the region are ASEAN political instruments such as the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) which is a key code of conduct governing inter-state relations in the region; the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear

Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) which keeps our region free of nuclear weapons; and the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and the on-going negotiations on a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC), which promote peaceful settlement of disputes and practical maritime cooperation in the South China Sea.

Human rights continues to be mainstreamed across the three pillars of ASEAN with ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) at the forefront, ensuring the implementation of the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration. AICHR's work has expanded, from promoting a human rights-based approach in cross-sectoral areas such as trafficking in persons, promoting safe drinking water and sanitation, and by embarking on civil rights advocacy with regard to freedom of expression, prevention of torture, and access to justice.

The implementation of measures under the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) provides ASEAN peoples with new opportunities through an open and integrated market where there are more product choices at competitive costs. The AEC Blueprint 2025 sets higher ambition through the deepening of existing integration areas, and incorporation of new focus areas such as Global Value Chains (GVCs), good regulatory practice, sustainable development, global megatrends and emerging trade-related issues.

Despite uncertainties surrounding trade tensions between major trading partners, pressure on the multilateral trading system, technological disruptions, and debt sustainability, the implementation of AEC Blueprint remains on track.





Several deliverables and key achievements have been achieved under the themes of Singapore's Chairmanship of "Resilient and Innovative" in 2018 and Thailand's Chairmanship of "Advancing Partnership for Sustainability" in 2019. They included the endorsement of the ASEAN Framework on Digital Data Governance, signing of the ASEAN Agreement on Electronic Commerce, as well as developing an ASEAN Innovation Roadmaps and Guidelines on Human Resource Development in Response to the 4IR, which illustrate the region's commitment to deepen cooperation in the era of the digital economy and e-commerce.

ASEAN's economies remained robust in 2018, despite uncertainties in the regional and global economies. Real GDP growth for 2018 stood at 5.2% with forecasted growth of 4.9% for 2019, according to the Asian Development Bank. Preliminary ASEAN statistics also indicate that total merchandise trade in 2018 grew by an estimated 8.1% year-on-year (YOY) to reach US\$2.8 trillion, while foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows increased by 5.3% YOY to reach US\$154.7 billion.

At the heart of ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) is the commitment to lift the quality of life of its peoples through cooperative activities that are people-oriented and people-centred. The ASCC activities open a world of opportunities to collectively deliver and fully realise human development, promote sustainable development, foster an ASEAN identity through inter-cultural understanding and mutual respect, and prepare ASEAN community to face new and emerging challenges in the future.

The ASCC regional cooperation covers a wide range of areas such as Culture and Arts,

Information, Education, Health Youth and Sports, Social Welfare and Development, Gender, Women and Children's Rights, Labour, Civil Service, Rural Development and Poverty Eradication, Environment, Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance.

ASCC pillar has also contributed to the strengthening of ASEAN identity with the 2nd phase of the ASEAN Communication Master Plan for 2018–2025 (ACMP II). The ACMP's theme, "ASEAN: A Community of Opportunities for All" will support ASEAN's efforts in implementing the three ASEAN Community Blueprints to communicate the character of ASEAN as "people-oriented and people-centred."

The ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) is at the forefront of ASEAN's strategy to instill resilience and face its vulnerabilities through a systematic regional disaster risk management and climate change adaptation that is harmonised with national and local policies and laws. It embodies the "One ASEAN, One Response" declaration by harnessing the individual and collective strengths of different sectors and stakeholders in ASEAN to effectively respond to disasters inside and outside the region.

ASEAN Connectivity aims to support integration and community building efforts by strengthening the foundational support needed to achieve the goals of political-security, economic, and socio-cultural pillars of the ASEAN Community.

The Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 is a multi-year, cross-pillar, cross-sectoral, and project-centric initiative that serves as a comprehensive framework to link the region through physical, institutional, and people-to-

people connectivity. With a Master Plan focusing on five strategic areas: sustainable infrastructure, digital innovation, seamless logistics, regulatory excellence, and people mobility, ASEAN Connectivity seeks to improve the way the people live, work, and travel. It creates a more competitive, innovative, and resilient environment. Ultimately, it will promote inclusive and equitable growth in the region and connect everyone as one community.

In entering the next phase of regional integration, ASEAN is coordinating responses to the geostrategic shifts and the global uncertainties that are taking place. Additionally, it will seize opportunities and address the challenges presented by the fourth industrial revolution. Last but not least, the issue of sustainability - both social and environmental, will be at the core of ASEAN's work so the region could continue to enjoy lasting peace, security and prosperity.



The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on 8 August 1967. The Member States of the Association are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. The ASEAN Secretariat is based in Jakarta, Indonesia.

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