Chapter IV

Regional Cooperation for Human Development

The fundamental rationale for regional cooperation, in whatever form, rests on the recognition by a group of countries of shared opportunities or constraints that provide the basis for joint action (Abonyi 2003). In this report, regional cooperation is directed at two objectives. First, it is seen to facilitate regional economic integration by engendering a stable regional macroeconomic environment—mainly through financial and monetary cooperation—and by helping countries achieve the critical threshold of development— primarily in terms of human resources and institutions—that is necessary to participate effectively in regional arrangements. Second, regional cooperation directly contributes to human development when countries jointly address common economic and social concerns. The latter includes mechanisms to compensate the 'losers' in the process of regional economic integration. This chapter deals with the relationship between regional cooperation and human development.

While the current impetus for regional cooperation is largely driven by the necessities of regional economic integration, it is imperative to highlight the importance of human development as a regional objective. This chapter deals with the relationship between regional cooperation and human development in Southeast Asia. It aims to highlight the various human development initiatives undertaken by different regional and international institutions working in the region.

A.   Forms and Rationale for Regional Cooperation

By taking joint action on issues that transcend national boundaries, countries can enhance their development prospects and boost their capacity to alleviate poverty, promote peace and security and achieve sustainable development. While most regional cooperation agreements in Southeast Asia were initially undertaken to provide strategic defense and strengthen the bargaining power of countries in the global political arena, these aims have since expanded to cover various social and economic concerns.

Political and Security Concerns

Inter-country cooperation plays a significant role in the promotion of peace and security. Regional collaboration enhances community solidarity, emphasizes common goals amongst politically or culturally distinct groups, and mitigates political power imbalances among neighbors. Crime has been increasingly global in nature requiring a multinational coordinated response in intelligence, surveillance, and prevention. Some of the major concerns are the trafficking of women and children, drugs, arms and contraband deals, money laundering and the cross border movements of fugitives from justice. International terrorism has drawn attention in recent years and it has become clear that a successful campaign to prevent it requires global and regional coordination efforts.

As mentioned in Chapter II (section G), one source of the low ranking in terms of the quality of governance of many countries in Southeast Asia is the presence of ethnic

conflicts. Closer cooperation and coordination among countries in the region is imperative for this problem to be resolved.

Economic Concerns

Regional integration and cooperation expands opportunities of participating countries particularly those with less developed economies to achieve faster and more equitable economic growth. Integrating smaller economies into the regional economic community allows countries to increase productivity through economies of scale. Expanded trade involves investment, new technology, skills and opportunities for better employment. Other well-recognized economic benefits of regional cooperation include increased business opportunities, better economic efficiency, and insulation from external shocks. This type of regional cooperation is what was referred to as that intrinsic to regional economic integration.

Functional Cooperation

Through facilitation of the sharing of information and best practices, countries can adopt better ways of meeting specific needs and concerns which are similar to other countries. This would go a long way in improving the ranking of Southeast Asian countries in terms of the quality of governance, specifically with regard to government effectiveness and regulatory quality. In the field of health, for example, regional cooperation can effectively check the proliferation of diseases and other health problems caused by the acceleration of global and regional integration and increased mobility of people. By sharing health information and technology, member countries can respond to emerging health problems more effectively. Individual countries find it too costly to carry out research on diseases and other specialized fields. To solve this, regional institutions support research and share technology that is indispensable to the region.

In the field of education, regional cooperation can encourage and support learning and also improve educational programming. In the Asia Pacific region, examples of cooperation in the field of education include the International Rice Research Institute, and Asian Institute of Management in the Philippines, the Asian Institute of Technology in Thailand, and the University of the South Pacific in Fiji.

Other Development Concerns

Regional cooperation can also enhance social protection. In Asia, which houses half the world's population and about 900 million poor, policies and programs designed to promote social protection are essential to help the large number of vulnerable and marginalized people. In this sense, regional cooperation can serve as a medium for bringing countries to share information and experiences, develop efficient and effective labor markets, reduce peoples' exposure to risks, protect women and children from exploitation, and provide cost-effective welfare programs and social "safety nets."

Environment and natural resources management is relevant to every country's concern. Concerted efforts by countries to preserve and sustain the environment and natural resources are important to assure future generations' consumption. The adverse effects of

natural resource degradation and environmental disasters spill over national boundaries. Hence, environmental protection and natural resource management is an area where regional cooperation and coordination would be important. Regional cooperation can lead to communal initiatives to address major environmental concerns and for the exploitation of commonly shared resources.

B.   Institutional Mechanisms for Regional Cooperation

The realization of human development through necessitates the combination of a myriad of shared and complementary efforts from rich and poor countries, international agencies, local authorities, private sector and civil society organizations. These interventions are usually aimed at overcoming market failures that result in suboptimal outcomes. Human development initiatives may be launched from the level of governments, at the level of the international system, or both (UNDP, 2003b). Regional cooperation initiatives oriented towards development, albeit with different objectives, have been launched by regional and international agencies such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the various organizations within the United Nations (UN).

There are three main institutions that promote regional cooperation in Southeast Asia: UN, ASEAN and the Greater Mekong Subregion program of ADB. Another form of regional cooperation is in the form of growth triangles, of which there are three in existence in Southeast Asia. However, due to space constraints, the growth triangles are not considered in this report.

An evaluation of the programs of the first two and their approaches to regional cooperation forms the basis of recommendations. Because it is the focal point of regional cooperation in Southeast Asia, more attention is given to ASEAN in this chapter.

Regional Cooperation for Human Development Initiatives within the United Nations

Within the United Nations family, several programs are geared towards the advancement of human development in Southeast Asia. These UN agencies involved are the United National Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

UNESCAP

As a regional commission of the United Nations, UNESCAP's mandate is to foster cooperation between its members in order to promote economic and social development in the Asia-Pacific region. It fulfills this mandate through:

- Policy advocacy and dialogue on global and regional commitments and critical emerging issues that need the urgent attention of its members.

- Regional knowledge networking to enable its members and associate members to share and discuss information and experiences on good and innovative practices.

- Training advisory services and other technical assistance aimed at strengthening the capacity of its members and associate members to formulate and implement effective policies and programs.

UNESCAP's regional cooperation initiatives are generally in the form of either a mandate where governments at the policy-level come up with a set of agreements or resolutions addressing common social and development issues as bases for cooperation; and technical assistance where countries collaborate with UNESCAP to conduct specific development activities. UNESCAP's activities related to human development come in two of its seven program areas of work, i.e., *social development,* including emerging social issues, and *poverty reduction.* A quick assessment of these program areas—based on the outcome issues of sustainability, empowerment, equity and productivity—is given below.

The subprogram of ***social development*** focuses on strengthening the capacity of UNESCAP members and associate members in the development and implementation of policies and programs to address persistent and emerging social issues in order to enhance the productivity and quality of human resources. In terms of sustainability UNESCAP has played a leading role in organizing high-level intergovernmental meetings addressing various issues for improving the productivity and quality of human resources, such as the Fifth Asian and Pacific Population Conference in December 2002, which reviewed the progress made by the countries and territories of the region in the implementation of the recommendations of previous international population conferences and reaffirmed the countries commitment to addressing various issues for improving the lives of its population.

In terms of empowerment, UNESCAP's traditional clients and partners are national governments. They determine its work program and act as key partners in implementing regional cooperation activities. UNESCAP has also involved state/provincial and local governments, NGOs, research and training institutes, the media and the private sector in the planning and implementation of its technical cooperation activities. UNESCAP plans to make its thematic committees and sub-committees represent key ministries and relevant stakeholders, such as local government, civil society, academia and the private sector, and share their expertise with the respective fora on critical issues and advise UNESCAP on program strategies to address these issues.

In terms of equity, although national governments are traditional target beneficiaries, NGOs, community-based organizations and private sector are increasingly becoming important beneficiaries of the secretariat's regional cooperation activities. UNESCAP

programs also benefit disadvantaged groups, including disabled persons, HIV/AIDS victims and older persons. Meanwhile, UNESCAP is committed to achieve gender balance in its organizational structure and programming of work. It has conducted in-

house workshops on gender mainstreaming for both professional and general staff to ensure that both women and men benefit from UNESCAP activities.

The subprogram of *poverty and development* focuses on strengthening the capacity of UNESCAP members and associate members to identify and analyze opportunities and constraints related to poverty eradication and to design and implement policies and programs to reduce poverty in accordance with the relevant Millennium Development Goals. In 2003, UNESCAP conducted an evaluation of its two flagship projects on poverty reduction as part of the secretariat's efforts to assess the value of its work and to draw lessons for improved planning and implementation of future UNESCAP projects. One is the Millennium Development Goals and the other flagship project is the Human Dignity Initiative.

This evaluation process sought to contribute towards enhanced national and regional knowledge and capacities for the achievement of the MDGs. It was expected to facilitate regional networking and processes for sharing of information and expertise. The report entitled "Promoting the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific: Meeting the Challenges of Poverty Reduction" was the first output delivered under the project. The report provides a qualitative region-wide assessment of the progress achieved and obstacles encountered in meeting the MDGs in the region.

In terms of sustainability the Executive Secretary established the Poverty Center in his office in November 2001 to implement the joint project. The Center spearheads the secretariat's efforts in helping countries meet the MDGs. In terms of empowerment, positive reception of the project report and clear benefits were expected to catalyze partnership between regional commissions and UNDP and heighten the role of regional commissions as critical players in the global attainment of the MDGs. Meanwhile, the MDG project employed a participatory steering process and benefited greatly from an external advisory panel of 10 eminent experts. A series of technical papers were commissioned as background materials for the report.

In terms of equity, the primary target beneficiaries are government agencies and policy and research institutes in the 58 countries and areas of Asia and the Pacific. However, every player involved in supporting MDGs, including civil society, donors and the private sector, could benefit from the project. Lastly, in terms of productivity, this initiative does not contribute directly to enhancing income levels and creating employment for the population. The key strength of the report is its purpose as a tool for advocacy and raising awareness related to the MDGs and for enhancing knowledge of the dynamics of poverty in the region.

The Human Dignity Initiative has implemented 30 community-based pilot projects in 5 countries of Southeast Asia. The objective was to promote participatory community-based initiatives that improve living conditions in poor and disadvantaged communities. In terms of sustainability, this project is a direct intervention at the grass-roots level. As such, it is a unique venture for UNESCAP and serves to build the secretariat's knowledge on such activities. UNESCAP has access to a wide and varying range of groups and individuals, from community-based organizations to central governments. Using this

comparative advantage along with its convening power as leverage, UNESCAP is in a unique position to link grass-roots experiences with the policy making process resulting in a broad-based approach to development. Meanwhile, the project intervention uses a bottom-up approach whereby data from the pilot projects are gathered and analyzed as inputs into a policy framework. The project involved community members at every step of the planning and implementation process.

In terms of empowerment, the project tapped UNESCAP's extensive networks of institutions and organizations in the region to identify those that are directly involved in community-based development. Through direct grants to these institutions and joint project implementation in the field, the project has benefited from the organization's community-based experiences and gained access to their grass-roots networks.

In terms of equity, the pilot projects were implemented in close cooperation with national counterpart organizations both government and NGOs. The primary clients are officials of local governments. People in a total of 50 low-income communities were benefited. In terms of productivity, the limited time frame (one year) for the implementation of the pilot projects would not allow adequate understanding on the impact of the project, particularly its contribution to employment and income levels of target clients.

Other activities conducted under the UNESCAP program on poverty and development include:

- Regional poverty alleviation program. Replication of best practices strategy on rural community development based on the Saemaul Undong methodology was initiated in 2001. Preparatory work in selected rural communities in two least developed countries, Cambodia and Lao PDR was completed. Its replication started in 2003.

- Promotion of low cost and environmentally friendly farming to assist small farmers, linking their marketing services through the Asia-Pacific Organic Farming and Green Food Information Network (OFGF.NET) initiated at the Asia-Pacific Symposium in Kunming, China in November 2000. The network provides technical advisory services, training, study tours, research studies as well as documentation, information and staff exchange among its members.

- Cooperation and collaboration with other intergovernmental bodies and NGOs in activities on rural poverty reduction. The Conference on Microfinance Policy and Governance was organized jointly by other organizations in March 2002 to build knowledge, institutional capacity and public-private sector cooperation in enhancing the effectiveness of microfinance as an instrument of poverty alleviation in the region. The Bangkok Declaration on Microfinance was adopted at this junction for further collaboration at the regional and national levels.

UNDP

The UNDP is the critical development arm of the United Nations. With a global network in 166 countries, the UNDP helps UN-member countries build and share solutions to the challenges of: 1) democratic governance, 2) poverty reduction, 3) crisis prevention and recovery, 4) energy and environment, and, 5) HIV/AIDS. The UNDP is primarily engaged in global advocacy and analysis to generate knowledge, alliance building and promotion of enabling frameworks on key issues, policy advice and support for national capacity building, and knowledge networking and sharing of good practices (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2004). The UNDP is involved in several regional initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region. Of these initiatives, two best exemplify regional cooperation for human development: The Urban Governance Initiative and the Asia-Pacific Access to Justice Network.

The Urban Governance Initiative (TUGI) was created by UNDP as a response to the growing trend of urbanization in the region. TUGI is a regional project of the UNDP that acts a hub for promoting good urban governance through institutional capacity building, providing policy advisory services, enabling innovations on tools and methodologies for urban governance and ensuring wide information dissemination and collaborative networking between and within cities in the Asia-Pacific region. It aims to meet the situational demands of towns and cities in the region for innovative approaches, institutional reforms and capacity building efforts that support participatory, transparent, accountable and equitable urban governance.

High rates of urbanization posited significant effects on the development and management of cities all over the region. Furthermore, several issues emerged as common problems within the different cities in the region, including: negotiation of competing demands for *infrastructure*, *land scarcity and security of tenure*, *balancing employment and pace of industrialization*, *transportation* issues and its effect on the urban environment, *employment and job creation*, *urban conflict and communal violence* intensified by issues of access to resources, as well as limited funds available to local governments to address these issues.

The first phase of The Urban Governance Initiative (TUGI) was implemented between October 1998 and December 2001. In its incipient phase, TUGI was able to popularize the concepts and principles of good urban governance throughout the region by employing the following processes:

- Building a substantive information dissemination mechanism in the form of a quarterly current awareness service entitled Urban Links;

- Supporting key pilot projects in the four cities of Penang, Malaysia; Kathmandu, Nepal; Shenyang, China and Suva, Fiji;

- Creating concrete working linkages with sub-regional institutions such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN);

- Developing and operationalizing TUGI Report Cards as a mechanism for community participation in local decision-making and assessment of local government performance; and

- Building capacities within local authorities through the provision of technical assistance in the form of tools and methodologies for good urban governance.

As regards program management, TUGI established a Programme Steering Committee (PSC) and an International Advisory Panel on Urban Governance. The project secretariat is based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and is supported by the Principal Project Representative in UNDP Malaysia and the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific.

In terms of sustainability, the TUGI Project was silent in its first three years of implementation (1998-2001). However, in the course of its interventions, it did popularize a five-point vision for well-governed and sustainable cities. Based on the principle of cities being our home, they would be:

- **Socially just:** This requires that the benefit of economic development be shared equitably by all sectors of society, including the poor and the physically challenged;

- **Ecologically sustainable:** The physical and biological resource base of the environment is the underlying basis for any social and economic productivity. Ecological sustainability requires that the maintenance of the ecological processes that keep the ecosystem in balance; the renewable use of the natural resources and the maintenance of biological diversity.

- **Politically participatory:** This implies the participation of all sectors of a society in development and governance activities is a key element in its success.

- **Economically productive:** This implies that economic sustainability is required to provide employment and generate income for the population so that they can meet their needs.

- **Culturally vibrant:** In societies that have complex, multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious domains, people need a culture of proactive respect for diversity.

Apart from the discussion of sustainability in the context of good urban governance, the TUGI project did not include programs in harnessing a sustainable environment to promote human development.

In terms of harboring participation and empowerment among sectors, TUGI employed its well-known Report Card system. TUGI Report Cards have been widely accepted and utilized by urban planners and administration. As a voice mechanism, TUGI Report Cards span fifteen issues, covering areas from transportation needs to the demands of the elderly in urban centers. The Cards opened up avenues for city stakeholders to engage

constructively with urban managers in creating a platform for information exchange and problem-solving. By translating demands of the constituency into feasible action plans based on diligent information documentation efforts and a systematic voice mechanism, implemented in partnership with all stakeholders, TUGI was able to foster better opportunities in addressing urban problems.

On a regional level, TUGI was able to establish the use of user-friendly information on good governance issues. It developed a wide international network on urban governance through the Urban Links, a quarterly current awareness service. TUGI explored the use of ICT to promote good urban governance by compiling over 100 best cities websites. In the course of its exploration, TUGI studied the various aspects of good governance – namely, effectiveness, responsiveness and transparency – through the use of ICT in facilitating governance at the local level.

During the first stage of its implementation, the TUGI project was totally reticent in promoting productivity, equity and accountability. Much of its efforts were geared towards information dissemination and policy advocacy on good urban governance.

Meanwhile, the UNDP had a separate project that sought to promote justice as a significant component of uplifting human development and augmenting poverty reduction efforts in the region. Since 2002, a regional "community of practitioners (CoP)," composed of UNDP field officers, the UN and other partners, has been promoting access to justice in the Asia and the Pacific through the Asia-Pacific Rights and Justice Network (AP-A2J). Access to justice is a major area of UNDP's Democratic Governance practice and a critical strategy for poverty reduction. The goal of UNDP's community of practice in Asia and the Pacific is to enhance access to justice, and justice-related development policies and programmes, for poor and disadvantaged people. AP-A2J involves approximately 30 UNDP staff from 17 Country Offices in the region, and supported by an electronic network of more than 80 members globally (UNDP, 2003a). The community has used a bottom-up process (the Asia Pacific Rights and Justice Initiative) to achieve two major results:

- *Policy and tool development*: Over the past year, practitioners have developed substantial knowledge on access to justice, and instruments to apply it in policy and programme development. The CoP's access to justice framework represents a sound niche for UNDP. It is guided by UNDP's human development paradigm and centred on people, particularly on those who are poor and disadvantaged. The framework has been defined for the purposes of poverty eradication and the achievement of the MDGs. It is supported by a series of tools for its implementation, especially by a Practitioner's Guide to Access to Justice, currently being finalized. The Guide represents one of the most comprehensive collection of lessons for access to justice programmes available, covering both results and how to achieve them. The Practitioner's Guide distils lesson from successes and failures coming from UNDP's experience, the CoP's external partners, and other national, bilateral and multilateral actors.

- ***Individual and organisational capacities to transform knowledge into practice.*** The use of a bottom-up approach to practice development has allowed for (a) better *relevance* of resulting knowledge for the practitioners' work, and (b) stronger *capacities* to transform knowledge into action. AP-A2J is a motivated, dynamic network of UNDP staff able to perform effective roles in pursuing justice for development. They have developed knowledge, created tools, and strengthened networks with partners, particularly in areas where UNDP expertise is lacking.

The Asia Pacific Rights and Justice Initiative is part of the Bureau for Development Policy's (BDP) efforts on practice development and is supported by the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP), and the UNDP-OHCHR HURIST programme (UNDP, 2003a).

In terms of process, the initiative has two major characteristics:

(1) It applies a bottom-up approach to practice development—based on the production, codification and dissemination of knowledge by practitioners themselves, for the purposes of (a) mutual learning, (b) production of tools, and (c) regional and global policy development. This requires minimising excessive reliance on outside experts, and building on existing strengths within the organisation, rather than substituting them. This is a key condition for "capacity development".

(2) The initiative's process also attempts to apply a rights-based approach to development to crystallize UNDP's niche, by (a) using UN standards in policy guidance, (b) trying to bring in the voice of disadvantaged people as *legitimate*, (c) establishing a clear framework for accountability in development, and (d) analysing the influence of conflict risks and power inequalities in development efforts.

In its entirety, UNDP's AP-A2J initiative does not give emphasis on the dimensions of sustainability and productivity. Its strength lies in the promotion of empowerment, equity and accountability dimensions of human development.

In terms of empowerment, the "access to justice" approach prioritizes the poor and disadvantaged people. In this regard, access to justice is a means to prevent and overcome human poverty, by allowing disadvantaged people to have access remedies for grievances they suffer. From this perspective, "access to justice" concentrates in (a) availability of remedies for grievances to poor and disadvantaged people, (b) their capacity to demand such remedies through formal and informal justice systems, and (c) the capacity of institutions to deliver justice to them. An empowering process anchored on rights-based parameters is necessary to achieve program results such as poverty reduction and MDGs. Enhancing disadvantaged people's capacities to have a greater control of the development process increases development effectiveness. The AP-A2J Network has identified priority disadvantaged groups in the region to focus on the practice of development: *urban and rural poor, ethnic and indigenous minorities, women, migrants*

and internally displaced persons, persons living with HIV/AIDs, and persons with physical/mental impairment. Children and minors are not dealt with to avoid unnecessary overlapping with UNICEF's important activities in the field of juvenile justice (UNDP, 2003a).

In terms of equity, the access to justice model developed by the AP-A2J Network underscores the build-up of individual, collective and institutional capacities to enhance the poor and disadvantaged peoples' access to remedies. Consequently, access to remedies for grievances parallels the crosscutting principle of equity in human development (UNDP, 2003a). In most instances, the poor and disadvantaged people have no access to remedies when they suffer grievances (e.g. fraud, theft of cattle, illegal arrest), and much more live in situations of permanent "illegality" (e.g. informal labor), which makes them hesitant to avail of justice systems. Under such circumstances, justice exists only for those who can afford it. This, in turn, further reinforces their alienation and marginalization. Laws can be biased against the poor and disadvantaged and are not necessarily neutral. Attempts to reform legal institutions are oftentimes resisted by those whose power and privileges are protected by the legal system. The transformation of this process is essential for reducing poverty and other social malaise in pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Finally, in terms of accountability, the AP-A2J initiative finds it necessary for people to protect themselves against abuses from those with more power, hold political leaders accountable and resolve individual and collective conflict without resorting to violence. The poor and the disadvantaged should have an access to the justice process with no significant risks. The process of seeking and obtaining remedy involves capacity building at the individual, collective and institutional levels. The first capacity disadvantaged people need is **normative protection** – that is, a legal or customary basis that *recognizes* particular grievances as being within the scope of justice systems (thus giving entitlement to remedies). Disadvantaged people also need **legal awareness**, so that they know it is indeed possible to seek redress through the justice system (naming), and who to demand it from (blaming). Initiating justice procedures (claiming) often requires **legal aid and counsel**, especially in criminal matters and complex judicial processes. Capacities for **adjudication** and **enforcement** are further needed to have specific remedies determined and enforced. **Civil society oversight** can play a critical role in strengthening institutional accountability for the provision of remedies. The final stage of the justice process is the enforcement of orders, decisions and settlements emerging from formal or traditional adjudication. As such, the functioning of enforcement mechanisms is key to access to justice and a precondition for the elimination of impunity (UNDP 2003 a).

ILO

Apart from the UNDP, the International Labour Organization also makes a considerable contribution in fostering regional cooperation initiatives for human development in Southeast Asia within the UN family. The ILO was the first specialized agency of the UN in 1946. It seeks to promote social justice and internationally recognized human and labor rights. The ILO formulates international labor standards in the form of Conventions and Recommendations setting minimum standards of basic labor rights: freedom of

association, the right to organize, collective bargaining, abolition of forced labor, equality of opportunity and treatment, and other standards regulating conditions across the entire spectrum of work related issues. It provides technical assistance primarily in the fields of: 1) vocational training and vocational rehabilitation; 2) employment policy; 3) labor administration; 4) labor law and industrial relations; 5) working conditions; 6) management development; 7) cooperatives; 8) social security; and, 9) labor statistics and occupational safety and health (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2004).

ILO promotes the development of independent employers' and workers' organizations and provides training and advisory services to those organizations. Within the UN system, the ILO has a unique tripartite structure with workers and employers participating as equal partners with governments in the work of its governing organs (ILO, 2004).

In 1997, the Trafficking in Children and Women (TICW) Project was implemented by the ILO through its International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) in an effort to further combat child labor in five countries in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), namely: Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand, Viet Nam and the Yunnan Province of the People's Republic of China. The TICW Project consisted several interventions, as follows: *awareness-raising*, *advocacy*, *capacity-building at the national and local levels*, and *direct assistance* to communities in the GMS. By mobilizing a broad alliance of stakeholders, the TICW Project covered work in education, skills training, employment creation, alternative livelihoods and legal literacy.

The TICW project consisted of two phases. The first phase began in 1997 while the second was implemented from 2000 to 2002. During its first phase, the project consisted of research, analysis of lessons learned in other IPEC project, and consultations with a wide range of stakeholders. Meanwhile, the second phase continued the interventions of the project in collaboration with ILO Gender Equality Promotion Programme (GENPROM).

In terms of project management, the TICW Project established a subregional office based in Bangkok, Thailand and has four staff. It also had country offices in Phnom Penh, Cambodia; Vientiane, Lao PDR; Chiang Rai, Thailand; Hanoi, Viet Nam; and, Kunming, Yunnan Province, PRC. Each of the country offices had two staff. All the people working in the country offices are nationals of those countries. The combined staff from the regional office and country offices has a total of six men and nine women. TICW interventions were funded by the Department for International Development-South East Asia (DFID-SEA), United Kingdom. Project interventions were implemented by country offices in collaboration with local organizations such as government agencies, non-governmental organizations, workers' organizations, employers' organizations, academic institutions and the media.

In terms of empowerment, the TICW Project was anchored on the idea of stakeholder ownership through participatory planning at national and sub-national levels. As such, the community development projects in selected geographical areas were able to promote

improved access to existing services, development of alternative livelihood strategies, skills training, income generation, basic education, and links to other initiatives in the same areas.

The TICW Project was able to ascertain the root cause of trafficking by employing participatory approaches. The TICW Project treats trafficking in children and women as complex phenomenon that varies by place, gender and ethnic group across the GMS. "Trafficking should be regarded as a continuum. At one end of the continuum are cases involving coercion, outright force or debt bondage. At the other end are cases in which employers exploit voluntary migrants who are inexperienced and vulnerable." (UNESCAP, 2003) Further, the project stated that trafficking stems from a diverse set of reasons, such as poverty, lack of education, natural disasters, cultural beliefs, village boredom, drug abuse, consumerism and demand for cheap labor.

The involvement of various stakeholders, such as policy makers, activist and village representatives, in the implementation of the TICW Project assured not only direct involvement of targeted clients, i.e. women and children who are at the risk of trafficking in the GMS, but also the effective delivery of the outputs to address the problem of trafficking. Governments have expressed their commitment by issuing decrees, participating in interventions, and providing funding. Steering committees have been established at the national level, the provincial level, and in some places, the district level. The existence of steering committees in these levels fostered stronger links between national policies and grass roots realities and interventions by local implementing agencies.

By employing participatory mechanisms some project initiatives were incorporated into government policy. In China and in Lao PDR, for instance, committees concerning the trafficking of women and children were created through decrees. Elsewhere, feedback mechanisms have been established so that national policy makers continue to receive information from the grassroots level. This was made possible through the mobilization of a broad alliance of stakeholders, including volunteer networks.

In terms of equity, TICW interventions were conducted, hundreds of families with children at risk of being trafficked from targeted income generation schemes, educational and skills training, micro-credit and awareness-raising interventions. The target population of the TICW Project is women and children who are at risk of trafficking in the Greater Mekong Subregion. The project employed safeguards to ensure that activities are appropriate to local socio-economic and cultural conditions. Those who underwent the trainings have gained self-confidence, had a more pro-active attitude, and have improved their earnings and health.

As regard productivity, part of the TICW Projects included direct assistance to the recipient countries in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS). Community projects promoted improved access to basic and existing services, developed alternative livelihood strategies, skills training, income generation, basic education and links to other initiatives in the region.

The TICW Project also collaborated with other international agencies in the development of project tools. This resulted into other pertinent programs that impact on the productivity of the people. Below is a list of these partner agencies as well as their programs:

- Psychosocial counseling methods for sexually exploited children, and on networking and coordination (in cooperation with the Human Resources Development Section of the UNESCAP)

- Improving labor migration mechanisms in the sectors of the economy that employ high number of illegal migrants (with the United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Trafficking in Women and Children in the GMS)

- Developing of guidelines on income generation, vocational training and education for children and women who are at the risk of being trafficked (in partnership with IPEC Fishing and Footwear Project)

- Exploring ways of combating trafficking in women and children through the support of the IPEC Southeast Asia Program

In terms of accountability, the TICW Project has involved both national and local governments of participating countries in the implementation of its various activities. It was able to increase the level accountability in these participating countries as governments have expressed their commitment by issuing decrees, participating in interventions and providing funding and additional resources to the Project. Steering committees have been established at the national level, the provincial level, and in some places, the district level.

Greater Mekong Subregion Program of ADB

The Asian Development Bank's Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Program began in 1992 with the goal of promoting economic and social development by forging strong economic linkages between the countries in the Subregion.[14] For a period of ten years, the thrust of the GMS Program has been the development of infrastructure to enable the harnessing and sharing of resource base, and promote the freer flow of goods and people in the Subregion. Economic linkages among the six countries in the GMS have been strengthened through a series of infrastructure and other highly pragmatic projects. In the first decade of intervention under the GMS Program, a series of feasibility studies led to several infrastructure projects, with overall investment amounting to about $2 billion.[15]

Despite massive benefits in terms of loans and resources, development management remained weak and deters sustainable economic development and poverty reduction. In as much as the interventions made by the ADB in the Greater Mekong Subregion remain

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[14] The countries that comprise the Greater Mekong Subregion are Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam and the Yunnan Province of the People's Republic of China.
[15] ADB (2002) *Building on Success: A Strategic Framework for the Next Ten Years of the Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Program*. Manila: Philippines, p.41

extensive, they are still within the purview of spurring growth through regional economic cooperation. In their evaluation report after the its decade-long intervention, ADB finds an imperative to broaden the impact of GMS Program in the subregion, which includes human resource development and environment and natural resources management.

As such, the ADB crafted a 10-year strategic framework that aims to expand the impact of the GMS program. The framework, dubbed *"Building on Success: A Strategic Framework for the Next Ten Years of the Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Program,"* articulates a vision a more integrated, prosperous and equitable Mekong sub-region. The new program rests on all program accomplishments, lessons learned in the implementation, as well as trends and challenges that best the subregion.

The strategic framework of the GMS Program has five major thrusts, namely[16]:

- Strengthen infrastructure linkages through a multisectoral approach
- Facilitate cross-border trade and investment
- Enhance private sector participation and improve its competitiveness
- Develop human resources and skills competencies
- Protect the environment and promote the sustainable use of shared natural resources

In the earlier stages of its implementation, the GMS Program failed to adequately consider the implications of subregional infrastructure development to the environment. With an expected increase in market demands in the Asia-Pacific region, bigger implications to the environment in the Mekong Subregion are also expected. The growing trend of intense production from multinational corporations would eventually affect the resource base in the Subregion. As markets in the region begin to open, resource consumption will heighten, causing major problems to the environment.

In next ten years (2002-2012), the GMS Program believes that proper management of shared natural resources and collective action to resolve cross-border environmental problems is essential to further the successes of the Program. "The serious extent of environmental degradation in the Subregion must be stopped and reversed." (ADB, 2002) This thrust calls for cooperation amongst the major stakeholders in the region, which includes governments, private sector, civil society organizations as well as donor agencies/institutions. The strategic framework of the GMS program aims of balancing the need of augmenting human development and forestalling the vicious circle of poverty on the one hand, and, preventing economic degradation on the other.

Throughout the decade-long interventions of the ADB in the Greater Mekong Subregion, decision-making and program implementation largely occurred at national, central ministerial level. The involvement and representation of other stakeholders at the local level, such as local officials, civil society, non governmental organizations as well as the private sector, have been inadequate. Local stakeholders were not fully encouraged to

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[16] Ibid., p. 20

state their needs and become more involved in the implementation of GMS Program activities.

In the course of program implementation in the next decade of interventions, the GMS Program aims to foster broad-based, genuine participation from various stakeholders both at national and local levels. The next round of interventions gives emphasis on the need to increase the capacity of stakeholders to voice out their demands and interests. This requires an opening up of avenues that foster broader and genuine participation wherein stakeholders are not just consulted, but involved as joint partners in the development and implementation of policies, strategies and projects. Indeed, this will lead to an improvement in the current working dynamics between and among major stakeholders, starting from senior officers and country managers up to local officials and organizations, as regards program implementation.

With around three-fourths of its people living in unabated subsistence means of livelihood, the need to augment the basic capacities and opportunities of the people in the Greater Mekong Subregion is indeed of great concern. In their previous interventions the region, the ADB focused on spurring regional economic growth by enabling market forces to work at the regional level. Admittedly, the Herculean task of furthering regional economic cooperation is highly impaired by the uneven level of development the countries in the region in terms of its resources and its people. Hence, the shift in the focus of its interventions in the late 1990's, from purely economic to a more holistic and developmentally-oriented track, was indeed arrestingly prudent, timely and strategic.

"The GMS vision of growth, equity and prosperity for the Subregion is reflected in the universal aspiration of a better world for all, as enshrined in the UN Millennium Development Goals.[17]" As such, the GMS Program, in its strategic framework, gave attention to expand the opportunities of the people living in the Mekong Subregion by developing human resources and skills competencies..

In the next phase of interventions, the GMS Program devotes its strategies to increase the opportunities and productivity in the Subregion through several initiatives, namely (a) introducing capacity building initiatives to address cross-border human resource development and labor market issues; (b) addressing health and social problems associated with mobile populations, and; (c) networking higher education and training institutions.

Although the GMS region has quite a large labor force, much of which is greatly underutilized, as indicated by high rates of unemployment and underemployment. Labor productivity is hindered by the apparent lack of skills, low literacy, and in some instances, malnutrition and poor health. Hence, the strategy of improving labor productivity is largely anchored on improving the capacities and opportunities of people beyond skills development and training.

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[17] An excerpt from the speech delivered by Liquin Jin, Vice President for Operations of the Asian Development Bank, entitled *"Poverty and Security in Asia."* The speech was delivered on 30 March 2004 at Washington, DC, USA. See http://www.asiasociety.org/speeches/jin04.html.

An array of regional technical assistances (RETA) has been provided by the GMS program to address the problem of inadequate access to opportunities of people beyond employment and livelihood. The assistance goes mostly to health and education services takes precedence over skills training and higher education. Some of these RETAs are, as follows:

- RETA 6083: ICT and HIV/AIDS Preventive Education in the Cross-Border Areas (December 2002)
- RETA 5970: Small Scale Regional Technical Assistance (SSRETA) for Drug Eradication in the GMS (December 2000)
- RETA 5958: Roll Back Malaria Initiative for the Greater Mekong Subregion (December 2000)
- RETA 5881: Preventing HIV/AIDS among Mobile Populations in the Greater Mekong Subregion (December 1999)
- RETA 5794: Study of Health and Education Needs of Ethnic Minorities in the GMS (June 1998)
- RETA 5751: Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS in the GMS (September 1997)
- RETA 5681: Cooperation in Employment Promotion and Training in the GMS (April 1996)

Regional Economic and Social Cooperation in ASEAN

Economic cooperation has always been a central goal of ASEAN since its inception, expressed in The *ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration)* of 1967 as well as in the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) and the first *Declaration of ASEAN Concord*, both adopted in 1976 (ASEAN 1967, 1976a & b). The explicit reference to economic cooperation in ASEAN's key constitutional documents facilitates actions by members on this issue. Nonetheless, it does not guarantee success of the programs adopted, since this depends on a range of other factors centered on both domestic and external conditions, which shape the incentives and disincentives for regional economic cooperation. Thus, despite the initiation of specific projects during the 1970s and 1980s, regional economic cooperation during this first phase was unsuccessful, due principally to the lack of shared interests in cooperation amongst essentially competing economies, exacerbated by the adoption of essentially inward-looking economic policies in most member states (Bowles and MacLean, 1996).

Success was more forthcoming in the second major phase of regional economic cooperation, namely the AFTA project. It was far more successful because AFTA was the instrument that the ASEAN members adopted to help them counter the perceived diversion of foreign investment to other sites, particularly to China, a key concern in ASEAN since the 1990s. Apart from the initial agreements in 1992 that launched AFTA, and the ASEAN Summit Declarations of 1992, 1995 and 1998 that also touched on economic cooperation, all other agreements signed between the ASEAN member

governments pertaining to AFTA and its associated economic cooperation schemes are formal and binding requiring domestic ratification by national legislatures (Table IV.1).

Although the original *Common Effective Preferential Tariff (CEPT) Agreement* on tariff reductions issued in 1992 provided few specific details, the necessary rules and procedures to govern the workings of regional tariff liberalization were soon instituted. Moreover, protocols on procedural matters were also adopted, notably on dispute settlement in 1996, on notification procedures in 1998, and on modification of CEPT concessions in 2000. In services and investment, initial statements of intent in the form of framework agreements were followed by negotiations to firm up commitments. The point to note is that from 1995, the constitutional documents underpinning AFTA became formal and binding on signatories, while the level of detail provided also increased. These agreements and protocols have increased the degree of constraint on members' actions. Although this does not prevent members from reneging on their commitments, the very act of reneging on formal, binding and detailed agreements and protocols they themselves had accepted would come at a cost to members' reputations, particularly in the eyes of investors.

ASEAN embraces the norm of open regionalism in economic cooperation ventures.[18] Economic integration projects underpinned by the norm of open regionalism are essentially projects that seek engagement with the global market. These projects are not intended to create a 'closed' regional bloc since barriers to non-members are not raised. This has been true of the AFTA project, which does not stipulate a common external tariff. At the time of writing, it does not appear that the ASEAN Economic Community project formally adopted at the ASEAN Summit in October 2003 will go down the 'closed regionalism' path either. While this project takes ASEAN further towards deeper integration beyond AFTA, and involves intra-ASEAN preferences, it is still envisaged as a tool that will help the ASEAN members remain *globally* competitive and engaged with global investment and trade networks.

In fact, the primary aim of proponents of ASEAN economic cooperation is to use regional economic cooperation to further the integration of member economies into global investment/production networks; it is not primarily to increase intra-regional trading links at the expense of extra-regional economic relationships.[19] Participation in the global economy was and continues to be regarded as the central route to growth and wealth creation for domestic societies. In turn, global economic participation is also regarded as the primary means of ensuring the well-being of domestic citizens and thus, securing the legitimacy of governing regimes. The need to ensure that ASEAN economic cooperation remained viable led member governments to accept partial rule-building in AFTA, which also acted to ensure credibility of the project in the eyes of investors, a point to which this chapter has alluded.

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[18]Open regionalism originally meant a form of regionalism based on the principles of unilateral liberalization rather than formally negotiated liberalization, as well as non-discrimination, meaning that regional concessions were offered to both members and non-members alike (Drysdale and Garnaut 1993: 187-88). Thus, the term was used in a more specific sense then it is today.

[19] The former is likely to grow as a by-product of region-wide trade liberalization, however.

The point to note is that more specific economic norms such as open regionalism are nested within the overarching norm of national resilience, which is ultimately about securing domestic stability and ensuring domestic regime security.[20] Thus, rather than unbridled neoliberalism operating as a substantive norm in ASEAN economic cooperation, a variant of neoliberalism, best termed 'embedded neoliberalism,' is the prevailing economic norm, reflecting continued state direction of and participation in economic life.[21] Nevertheless, the ASEAN states remain committed to core liberal norms such as the market, economic efficiency and competitiveness, although these states recognize their crucial role in ensuring such outcomes and in pacing their respective shifts to neoliberal forms of economic governance. Moreover, the (embedded) neoliberalism inherent in ASEAN is also reflected in its socio-economic agenda, which does not espouse any redistributive program at the regional level through direct resource transfers between richer and poorer areas/states.

Nevertheless, ASEAN also emphasizes cooperation in social development in its key constitutional documents, namely the TAC and the first *Declaration of ASEAN Concord* (ASEAN, 1976a&b). As economic integration intensified after 1992, the level of attention and detail accorded to economic cooperation in the ASEAN documents increased sharply. On the other hand, social development remained categorized under the broad rubric of 'functional cooperation,' which encompassed a wide range of issue areas ranging from health, rural development and poverty, social welfare, HIV/AIDS, labor, education, disaster relief, sustainable development, and women, youth and children.[22] It was only after the 1997 financial crisis that social development issues became more focused around the fallouts of globalization and regional liberalization. Aside from the devastation caused by the financial crisis, the accession of the new members into ASEAN, which took place in 1995 (Vietnam), 1997 (Laos and Myanmar) and 1999 (Cambodia), also prompted greater attention to social development and socio-economic issues. Much of this attention to social development issues came at the behest of these new and less developed member states.[23]

These concerns were expressed through *ASEAN Vision 2020: Partnership in Dynamic Development*, a document adopted by the ASEAN leaders at their Informal Summit in December 1997. *ASEAN Vision 2020* envisaged ASEAN as a community of caring societies where there would be 'equitable access to opportunities for total human development' and in which the development gap among member economies would be reduced even as members forged closer economic integration (ASEAN, 1997). These themes were repeated a year later in the *Hanoi Declaration* of 1998 (ASEAN, 1998a). To realize these broad goals, a series of action plans have been initiated, with the first and most encompassing being the 1998 *Hanoi Plan of Action* (ASEAN, 1998b).

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[20] These trade-offs are discussed in Nesadurai (2003).
[21] In embedded neoliberalism, the market is 'embedded' in domestic society, that is, the market is to be governed in the interests of both efficiency and domestic social priorities. The original term comes from Ruggie (1998).
[22] See the 1992 Singapore Declaration (ASEAN, 1992) and the 1995 Bangkok Declaration (ASEAN, 1995).
[23] Telephone interview with senior official of the ASEAN Secretariat, 1 December 2003.

A number of specific programs in social development were outlined in this Plan, including implementing the *Plan of Action on ASEAN Rural Development and Poverty* and the *ASEAN Plan of Action on Social Safety Nets*, as well as establishing an ASEAN Foundation to finance social development projects aimed at reducing unequal development, poverty and socio-economic disparities. The more relevant programs are detailed in Box IV.2. Other ASEAN Plans of Action dealing with more specific, sectoral issues include those on Social Development, Culture and Information, Science and Technology, Environment, Drug Abuse and Control and Transnational Crime.[24] Other specific projects and work programs in areas such as HIV/AIDS, children, skills training for disadvantaged women and youth, and occupational safety and health, to name a few have also been formulated.

At the Fourth Informal Summit in 2000, the *Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI)* was adopted, which was aimed at narrowing the development gap within ASEAN and assisting the new members (Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Myanmar) to participate fully in regional economic integration. This plan was formally adopted in 2001 by the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting through its *Hanoi Declaration on Narrowing the Development Gap for Closer ASEAN Integration* (ASEAN, 2001). This document identified four priority sectors: human resources development, infrastructure, information and communication technology, and capacity building for regional integration. These were later integrated into a five-year IAI Work Plan (2002-2008) drawn up in February 2002 (ASEAN Secretariat, 2002).

One example where closer cooperation can enhance human development directly is the implementation of relevant provisions in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services, specifically those related to the movement of natural persons. This can result in the freer flow of skilled labor and professionals among ASEAN member states, likely benefiting the CMLV countries in terms of increased access to health services. Proposals in this area at the regional level are presented in Box IV.3.

The importance of the social dimension of ASEAN was reaffirmed in the 2003 *Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II)*, which integrated the economic integration and socio-economic dimensions of ASEAN together with the political/security component in the form of an integrated ASEAN Community (ASEAN, 2003). One of the three pillars of this Community, the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC), emphasizes the social development dimension of ASEAN.[25] In particular, it aims at ensuring that regional economic integration does not exacerbate socio-economic disparities within ASEAN, that all peoples are able to fully participate in the opportunities generated by globalization more broadly and regional liberalization more specifically, with the resulting wealth gains more equitably distributed amongst populations. Secretariat officials are currently working on providing detailed strategies to

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[24] ASEAN Secretariat, 'Overview: Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (www.aseansec.org/147.htm; accessed 14 November 2003).
[25] The other two pillars are the ASEAN Economic Community and the ASEAN Security Community.

realize the ASCC, particularly through the Vientiane Action Plan, a six-year work program in social issues that will replace the Hanoi Plan of Action in 2004.[26]

The greater attention devoted to social development issues and the more specific initiatives set out in these later constitutional documents, which went beyond the broad declarations on social development found in the earlier documents of the 1970s, the 1980s and even in the 1990s until the financial crisis is noted. The earlier emphasis had, in fact been on socio-cultural cooperation. The later, post-1997 documents help to establish in more concrete fashion an extensive social development agenda for ASEAN, as well as specific programs to help realize these goals. While the inclusion of social development goals and programs in key constitutional documents does not guarantee success in realizing them, the inclusion of these goals and programs, nevertheless, establishes their shared importance for ASEAN and facilitates further actions on them.

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[26] Telephone interview with senior official of the ASEAN Secretariat, 1 December 2003.

Table IV.1 Key Constitutional Documents of AFTA and Associated Regional Economic Cooperation			
Agreements (signed)	Degree of Formality[a]	Type of Commitments[b]	Form of Agreement[c]
Framework Agreement on Enhancing Economic Cooperation (28-1-92)	Informal	Not clearly stated	Few specific details
Agreement on the Common Effective Preferential Tariff (CEPT) Scheme for AFTA (28-1-92)	Informal	Not clearly stated	Some details provided
Protocol to Amend the Framework Agreement on Enhancing ASEAN Economic Cooperation (15-12-95)	Formal	Binding	Additional details provided
Protocol to Amend the Common Effective Preferential Tariff Scheme for AFTA (15-12-95)	Formal	Binding	More details provided than original CEPT Agreement
Protocol on Notification Procedures (8-10-98)	Formal	Binding	Detailed procedures provided
Protocol on the Special Arrangement for Sensitive and Highly Sensitive Products (30-9-99)	Formal	Binding	Substantive targets and procedures outlined
Protocol Regarding the Implementation of the CEPT Scheme Temporary Exclusion List (23-11-2000)	Formal	Binding	Detailed procedures provided on modification of CEPT concessions
Protocol on Dispute Settlement Mechanism (26-11-96)	Formal	Binding	Detailed procedures provided
ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (15-12-95)	Formal	Binding	Statement of Intent
Protocols to implement the three commitment packages negotiated under the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (December 1997,1998 & 2001)	Formal	Binding	Commitment details provided in annexes
Framework Agreement on the ASEAN Investment Area (8-10-98)	Formal	Binding	Statement of intent, providing procedures for future negotiations
Declaration of ASEAN Concord (II) (Bali Concord II) (October 7, 2003)	Informal	Not applicable	Political declaration to establish the AEC

[a] Ratification is required for formal agreements; [b] Whether binding or non-binding; [c] Degree of detail

Source: Nesadurai (2003: 164-5) and ASEAN (2003)

Box IV.2 A Description of Relevant ASEAN Programs

ASEAN Action Plan on Social Safety Nets

In their second meeting held last 29-30 October 1998, the ASEAN Senior Officials on Rural Development and Poverty Eradication agreed that an ASEAN Task Force on Social Safety Nets be established with the objective of developing and implementing an action plan to ameliorate the impact of the crisis. In implementing the action plan, the Task Force would ensure that gender and environmental concerns are taken into account. The primary objective of the Action Plan was to build capacity in participating countries on the following:

- Assessing and monitoring the social and economic impact of the crisis and identifying the target groups affected and their needs;

- Developing and implementing social safety net programs for the disadvantaged and vulnerable;

- Monitoring and improving the effectiveness of economic and social services delivery; and

- Promote public awareness of the impact of the crisis particularly on the poor.

In terms of the development and implementation of social safety net programs, the task force was mandated to consider developing projects to share experience and best practice in Southeast Asia on the design and implementation of the following, among others:

- social security systems for persons working in the informal sector,

- services for school dropouts and street children,

- workfare (emergency work relief) programs,

- micro-finance and self-employment programs,

- maternal and child health services,

- psycho-social care for affected families;

- disaster victims/displaced communities; and

- assistance for the elderly and disabled.

The Task Force on Social Safety Nets was also directed to meet regularly to develop and review the progress of the implementation of the action plan.

Initiative for ASEAN Integration

In November 2000, ASEAN leaders agreed to launch an "Initiative for ASEAN Integration" (IAI) program, which gives direction to and sharpens the focus of collective efforts in ASEAN to narrow the development gap between its older and newer members, namely the countries of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam. To realize this objective, the ASEAN leaders, at their Summit Meeting in Phnom Penh in November 2002, endorsed a work plan with 54 projects. This program was intended to ensure dynamic and sustained growth of the sub region—geographically, the CLMV countries happen to be located in the same region—and prosperity of the peoples. Specifically, this six-year IAI work plan (July 2002 to June 2008) will assist these countries to catch up with the others by ensuring that the economic wheels of their economies move at an accelerated pace.

The programs, activities and projects under the work plan have been directed at strengthening the CLMV countries' capacity, capability and resolve in meeting the challenges ahead such as reducing poverty, preparing them to face global competition and also assisting them to gain some competitive edge in world markets. The IAI Work Plan for CLMV has focused on the priority areas of Infrastructure Development (Transport and Energy), Human Resource Development (Capacity Building, Labor and Employment, and Higher Education), Information and Communications Technology, and Promoting Regional Economic Integration (Trade in Goods and Services, Customs, Standards and Investments) in the CLMV countries.

As of 1 April 2004, the number of projects has been expanded to 74, of which 10 have been completed, 10 are being implemented, 23 have secured firm funding and are in the planning stage while another 11 have secured partial funding and are in the planning stage and five are being matched. Examples of the ten completed projects are:

- Malaysia Proposal: Inland Waterways Management Training Program for CMLV countries

- India Proposal: Railway Training Program for CMLV countries

- ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Program Research Project: Options for Managing Revenue Losses and Other Adjustment Costs of CMLV Participation in AFTA

Source: ASEAN Secretariat website, www.aseansec.org

Box IV.3 Proposals at the regional level to deal with the movement of natural persons

Establish bilateral or regional Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs)

Since the practice of professions has domestic regulatory implications, there is a need to evaluate the capability of the service provider to render the service in order to safeguard public interest and the welfare of the consumers. If a certification process is done for domestic service providers, it should also be done for foreign-service providers as part of the regulatory function of governments. Once an MRA agreement is established it will be easier for professionals to move within the coverage of the MRA. Initially, it can start with less contentious items with significant common grounds like the accreditation of higher educational institutions. Then it can proceed with the process of establishing equivalence of education levels, degrees, and quality of graduates. The final process is the recognition of licenses and professional certifications and experience. Although domestic regulation is an inherent component of state responsibility, the private sector can have a significant role in the formation of MRAs. The establishment of an MRA can be initiated by various professional associations and other concerned organizations in the private sector as a way of assisting the government in domestic regulation under a freer movement of natural persons.

At the regional level, improvements in market access on the movement of natural persons can proceed through the establishment of MRAs on specific professions and occupations. Since MRAs are very difficult, lengthy and tedious to undertake at the multilateral level, a bilateral or regional MRA may be more practicable and feasible that can contribute positively to the liberalization of the movement of natural persons at least at the regional level.

At the ASEAN, the ASEAN Framework for Trade in Services (AFAS) provides member countries to enter into bilateral or regional mutual recognition agreements. The intention in the recognition of education, experience, and other forms of certifications from the other member states is for the licensing and certification of service providers in the host member states.

Review the immigration policies in the region

The ASEAN has lifted the visa requirement for its citizens for easy movement across the region. This facility is also done for business purposes under the APEC business visa. What can facilitate further the movement of natural persons is it's de-linking from the mode of commercial presence. For example, the issuance of a visa for temporary employment to render a specific service in a host country for a specified period can boost the movement of natural persons in the region.

Hasten the implementation of liberalization schemes in services

The ASEAN Framework Agreement in Services (AFAS) was established with the

objective of forming a free trade area in services in the ASEAN. This objective can be attained through the improvement of the efficiency and competitiveness, diversification of production capacity and supply, and the distribution of services within and outside ASEAN. Since movement of natural persons is part of the mode of supply in the regional liberalization framework in services, the immediate implementation of AFAS can accelerate the movement of natural persons in the region. There is a need to substantially eliminate restrictions to trade in services and liberalize trade in services by expanding the depth and scope of liberalization beyond those undertaken under the GATS. The aim of the new liberalization guidelines is to have free flow of all services by 2020 while fast tracking selected sectors by 2010.

Source: Excerpts from Tullao and Cortez (2003)

C.   The 'ASEAN Way' and Organizational Approach

It is obvious that ASEAN has a very comprehensive framework that deals with regional integration and cooperation in Southeast Asia. Under this framework specific programs to deal with human development issues have been designed. Table IV.2 shows how various ASEAN initiatives correspond to the different objectives of regional cooperation. However, an important question is whether ASEAN has the resources and appropriate philosophy to carry out these programs effectively. This section presents an overview of the style and approach of ASEAN in managing its affairs. It will also be an input to the recommendations relevant for regional cooperation mechanisms (Section IV.F).

Table IV.2	
Relating Objectives of Regional Cooperation to ASEAN Initiatives	
Objective of Regional Cooperation	ASEAN Initiative
1. Compensation of 'losers'	ASEAN Plan of Action on Social Safety Nets
2. Hasten economic convergence	Initiative for ASEAN Integration
3. Directly Enhance Human Development	Various ASEAN Plans of Action
4. Engender regional macroeconomic stability	ASEAN Surveillance Process

Behavioral and Procedural Norms: Non-Interference and the 'ASEAN Way'

Inter-state behavior in ASEAN is guided by two sets of norms: regulative norms, or the 'ground rules' regarding member states' internal and external relations, and procedural norms, which guide collective decision-making. The primary regulative, or behavioral norm of ASEAN is that of non-interference in the internal affairs of another state, given formal expression in the TAC (Job 1999). This principle is stressed in Articles 2 and 10 of the TAC, with the latter enjoining member states from participating 'in any activity which shall constitute a threat to the political and economic stability, sovereignty, or

territorial integrity' of another member (ASEAN, 1976a). It is through this principle that ASEAN reassures its members that their territorial and political integrity is not jeopardized by another member engaging in direct or indirect acts of subversion. This norm, consequently, also contributes to securing domestic regimes, a key concern in ASEAN since its inception in 1967, which continues to date given ongoing nation-building and political consolidation in member states.

Apart from these behavioral norms, the procedural norms of ASEAN—collectively termed the 'ASEAN Way'—govern the manner in which members engage in collective decision-making. Prescribing means rather than ends, the ASEAN Way specifies how policy-makers should conduct themselves in the ASEAN context (Busse 1999). The 'ASEAN Way' to collective decision-making and problem solving emphasizes informality and an aversion to formal institutions, flexibility, consensus, a high degree of discreetness, and non-confrontational bargaining styles (Acharya 1997). These norms help to reinforce the domestic autonomy of governing regimes by reassuring member states that they will not be publicly pressed to undertake actions that run counter to domestic interests. Instead, private or discreet persuasion amongst the ASEAN membership, sometimes multilaterally, sometimes among a subset of members, is employed to reach an acceptable consensus (Mak 1997). In the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II last October 2003 (Bali Concord II), the ASEAN leaders re-affirmed the 'fundamental importance of adhering to the principle of non-interference and consensus in ASEAN cooperation' (ASEAN, 2003).

From the middle of the 1990s, the ASEAN governments adopted an increasing number of rules and procedures to govern regional economic cooperation, consequently reducing to a significant extent their respective individual autonomy or sovereignty in aspects of economic policy. Moreover, inter-state diplomacy in this area also departed from the 'ASEAN Way' of cooperation as members engaged in hard bargaining, often rather confrontational, over emerging points of contention.[27] The ASEAN members were clearly willing to forego the right to non-intervention, albeit partially, by accepting constraints on their freedom of policy choice in economic matters simply because this was believed to be necessary to ensure that AFTA remained credible to foreign investors.[28] Nevertheless, non-interference and adherence to the 'ASEAN Way' remain primary or fundamental in ASEAN, guiding the behavior of members in the first instance unless they choose to depart from them in their quest for cooperation (Capie 2003).

Moreover, consensus decision-making does not necessarily imply unanimity. Flexibility is the watchword in ASEAN, always mindful of the sovereignty of its members and of the differences in their levels of political, social and economic development that impinge on their capacity to engage in cooperation on particular issue areas. Thus, implementation of ASEAN projects is sometimes framed under the 'ASEAN minus X' principle to allow member governments willing to move faster on a particular project to do so without being held back by those unable or unwilling to do so. While such flexibility can retard the pace of cooperation, they have been vital in ensuring that all members remain on board, in the

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[27] Nesadurai (2003), pp. 151-70.
[28] *Ibid*.

process sustaining vital cooperation projects. ASEAN cooperation on services now follows the 'ASEAN minus X' principle, for instance, a recognition of the reality that cooperation in services liberalization remains contentious for a number of members and cannot, therefore, be undertaken at the same pace for all members.

Role of the ASEAN Secretariat

The ASEAN Secretariat was established as a permanent secretariat for ASEAN in 1976, and located in Jakarta. Although the ASEAN governments had not wished to establish a secretariat at ASEAN's formation in 1967 out of a shared concern against unnecessary institutionalization of the Association, by 1976 they had come to recognize the need for a central administrative organ to provide for greater efficiency in the coordination of the various organs in ASEAN and for more effective implementation of its projects and activities (ASEAN, 1976c). While several amendments were made in 1983, 1985 and 1989 to the basic 1976 agreement that established the Secretariat, these changes were minor.

The Secretariat was revamped in 1998 to place it in a better position to plan for development and manage ASEAN programs and projects, including cooperation and social development, two areas vital for human development. The Secretariat serves as a focal point where the planning, design, prioritization of implementation and monitoring of ASEAN cooperation programs in these areas are being coordinated with the sectoral bodies (committees, task forces, experts/working groups) and with member governments. These projects are appraised by the Secretariat, and those that meet ASEAN priorities as outlined in its key constitutional documents, particularly the 1998 Hanoi Plan of Action, are then recommended by the Secretary General to member governments for implementation. These programs may be supported by the various funding schemes available in ASEAN, such as the ASEAN Fund, Science and Technology Fund, and the Cultural Fund, while specific projects involving the ASEAN Dialogue Partners and international organizations draw on funding from these parties.[29]

Since 1 December 2003, the Bureau of Functional Cooperation, under which all social development issues had been grouped since 1992, was renamed the Bureau for Resources Development comprising three sub-programs in Human Development (to include social welfare and health), Natural Resources (to include agriculture, natural resources and the environment) and Culture and Information. Under the new arrangement, disaster management will be moved to a new category called 'Special Projects'.[30] The Special Projects, an innovation of the Secretariat, will encompass cross-cutting issue areas that need to be addressed on a broad front and that do not lend themselves to narrow sectoral compartmentalization. Poverty, gender and youth matters are among the new cross-cutting issues that will be addressed as special projects spanning multiple sectors.

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[29] Information from ASEAN Secretariat. 'ASEAN Projects: Overview', (www.aseansec.org/14431.htm) and ASEAN Secretariat, 'Special Projects: Development Cooperation' (www.aseansec.org/14433.htm). Both documents accessed on 14 November 2003.
[30] Information on the revamped organizational structure in the Secretariat (as at 1 December 2003) is based on a telephone interview with a senior official from the ASEAN Secretariat, 1 December 2003.

The aim is to mainstream these cross-cutting issues with other areas of cooperation under ASEAN, including regional trade liberalization and economic integration. Thus, for instance, new projects have been proposed that aim to explore the social impacts of regional integration. These projects will build on the initiatives already undertaken after the 1997-98 financial crisis. The Australian Agency for International Development (AUSAID) funded two in-depth projects aimed at developing capacity in ASEAN for social impact assessment and to design effective social protection/social safety nets programs.[31] While the issue of social protection may become a sensitive issue for a few member governments concerned that devoting attention to the social fallouts of market liberalization may jeopardize ASEAN economic integration, the Secretariat staff hope to convince member governments that paying attention to such issues will help support further economic integration and more importantly, that building capacity in social policy will help members face future economic downturns. The Secretariat hopes to include the national planning agencies of all member governments to address these cross-cutting issues, and especially to incorporate them in meaningful work programs in the forthcoming Vientiane Action Plan.[32]

Thus, the ASEAN Secretariat has increasingly adopted a pro-active role in raising awareness of new issues in social/human development that require joint, regional solutions, as well as in identifying and drawing up regional projects. In this regard, the Secretariat often works closely with relevant United Nations agencies, such as UNAIDS and the UNDP.[33] The proposal to explore the impact of regional economic integration on social development and welfare is a Secretariat initiative, supported strongly by the new members of ASEAN.[34] This is in contrast to the period before 1993 when national governments tended to propose projects for consideration at the ASEAN level that were more often projects that met national priorities but were not of interest to other member governments. It is for this reason that many ASEAN projects failed to be sustained at the regional level. At present, cooperation in social development tends to be more purposive, guided by programmatic plans and is no longer ad-hoc or piecemeal. The infrastructure for social development cooperation has also been transformed with the establishment of specialized networks in a range of social development fields.

The pro-active role of the Secretariat needs to be further strengthened, however. Although staffing levels have increased, professional staff dealing with social development issues have had to attend a wide range of meetings, leaving little time for reflection, strategizing and innovation.[35] Attention should be paid to ensuring that there is sufficient professional staff at the Secretariat to further strengthen its efforts at identifying and designing innovative but necessary projects in social development. Staff expansion

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[31] Paper on 'Regional Cooperation on Social development: The Case of ASEAN' prepared by the ASEAN Secretariat (mimeo).
[32] ASEAN-level meetings of national planning agencies have been dormant since 1994.
[33] Telephone interview with senior official of the ASEAN Secretariat, 1 December 2003.
[34] *Ibid.*
[35] *Ibid.*

will also help in building the Secretariat's networks with external institutions and funding agencies, through which additional sources of funding may be obtained.

Funding

Aside from specialized funds to finance specific ASEAN projects, such as the ASEAN Fund, the Science and Technology Fund and the Cultural Fund, ASEAN has to date relied heavily on its dialogue partner states to fund ASEAN projects.[36] Although member governments make an annual contribution to ASEAN, this is largely used for operational expenditure, particularly Secretariat staff salaries.

While ASEAN has benefited from dialogue partner funding, this trend nonetheless increases ASEAN's dependence on external funding and subjects the institution to conditionalities imposed by funding governments. Other conditions imposed by dialogue partners specify, for instance, the exclusion of rich ASEAN members such as Brunei and Singapore, and to a lesser extent, Malaysia, from participating in the projects to be funded. While it seems reasonable that richer members are excluded, such moves to limit funding to a subset of ASEAN members is said to prevent meaningful ASEAN-level cooperation projects that involve all ten members from being undertaken.[37] While the US State Department is said to be keen on reviving its funding relationship with ASEAN, which had lain dormant for the past ten years, only four ASEAN states—the poorer ones—will be eligible for funding. This reinforces concerns about the implications for meaningful ASEAN-level cooperative projects of excessive dependence on dialogue partner states for funding.

The Hanoi Plan of Action called for the establishment of an ASEAN Foundation to finance social development projects aimed at reducing inequality, poverty and socio-economic disparities (ASEAN, 1998b). Rather than function as an official funding arm of ASEAN, the ASEAN Foundation was mandated to raise funds from other international foundations, charities and the private sector. Its establishment potentially increases the sources of funding for ASEAN and could reduce dependence on the dialogue partners. It is, therefore, imperative that the ASEAN Foundation is strengthened and greater efforts invested into making it a viable source of funding for ASEAN cooperation on social development.

D.   Avenues to Enhance Regional Cooperation

ASEAN has very well-established networks of governance, particularly with other states, other relevant international/regional organizations and with the private business sector. Unfortunately, its links with civil society are limited at present, compared to the other three links, which could have some bearing on both the efficacy and accountability of ASEAN social development programs specifically and as a regional institution more broadly.

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[36] *ibid.*
[37] *ibid.*

Non-member States

ASEAN has an extensive network with non-member states through its Dialogue Partners scheme. Consultations between ASEAN and its Dialogue Partners are held at the level of the foreign ministers on an annual basis, particularly through the Post-Ministerial Conferences (PMC) held at the close of the annual AMM. ASEAN's Dialogue Partners include Australia, Canada, China, the European Union, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America. ASEAN also promotes cooperation with Pakistan on certain sectors.[38] Some dialogue partners have additional functional channels, aside from the overarching PMC, through which consultations with ASEAN are undertaken.

The best developed of these involve Australia, ASEAN's first Dialogue Partner since 1974.[39] Australia networks with ASEAN through a number of additional channels, such as the ASEAN-Australia Forum, the Joint Planning Committee (JPC) Meeting, the ASEAN-Australia Economic Program (AAECP), and the ASEAN-Australia Business Council (AABC). The AAECP, established in 1974, was the first collaborative development program between ASEAN and a Dialogue Partner. The program was the main mechanism for channeling Australian assistance for ASEAN projects until 2002-3.

While the ASEAN-Australia cooperative network is the most extensive and best developed amongst ASEAN's ten Dialogue Partners, many of the other bilateral networks also involve concrete projects. Some of these projects are aimed at developing the capacity of the ASEAN Secretariat in various areas and involve funding from the dialogue partner concerned.[40] Moreover, two flagship projects of ASEAN – the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) and Mekong Basin Development receive external funding from Dialogue Partners such as Australia, Japan, China, South Korea and possibly India, while ASEAN contributes in kind through a range of technical assistance programs and other non-financial contributions.[41] Important though dialogue partner funding has been to ASEAN, the caveats raised above, centered on restrictive conditionalities and excessive dependence, should nevertheless be considered. In addition, the ASEAN Committees established in countries having dialogues with ASEAN also contribute to the ASEAN networks of governance by acting as the outpost of ASEAN in the capital of that host country. The main aim of these committees, which currently number 15, is to maintain close contact with government agencies of the host country, and to make representation on behalf of ASEAN when necessary.[42]

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[38] See ASEAN Secretariat, 'Overview: Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (www.aseansec.org/147.htm; accessed 14 November 2003).
[39] Information on ASEAN-Australia cooperation activities was obtained from ASEAN Secretariat, 'ASEAN-Australia Dialogue', (www.aseasec.org/12974.htm; accessed 18 November 2003).
[40] A full list of these various projects is documented in ASEAN Secretariat (2003: 120-31).
[41] See ASEAN Secretariat, 'Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI): Work Plan for the CLMV Countries', (www.aseansec.org/14680.htm; accessed 18 November 2003).
[42] See ASEAN Secretariat, 'Terms of Reference and Guidelines for the Organisation of ASEAN Committees in Third Countries', (www.aseansec.org/14815.htm; accessed 14 November 2003). As at October 2003, ASEAN Committees have been established in the following 15 capitals: Beijing, Berlin, Brussels, Canberra, Geneva, Islamabad, London, Moscow, New Delhi, Ottawa, Paris, Seoul, Tokyo,

International/Regional Organizations

ASEAN's most extensive extra-regional cooperation is with the Northeast Asian states through the ASEAN Plus Three (APT) process. This involves networking at various levels—leaders, ministers, senior officials and the private sector. Through these processes, a number of significant cooperative projects have been initiated, the most notable being the Chiang Mai Initiative of bilateral currency swap agreements. Other joint projects include those aimed at helping small and medium-scale enterprises through training and technical assistance, human resource development, electronic-learning, food security, the environment and energy cooperation.

Other notable networks with international organizations include those with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank. These networks bring technical and financial assistance to ASEAN through their association with a variety of ASEAN initiatives and projects. The ADB, for instance, provided both the financial and technical resources to establish the ASEAN Surveillance Process to monitor macroeconomic and financial developments in ASEAN member states, while the World Bank is involved in the Joint ASEAN-World Bank Initiative on Mainstreaming Social Development (MSD).The MSD Initiative is especially interesting as it attempts to alter, at a normative level, the core goals on which national and regional economic governance should be based.[43] Its main aim is to highlight that growth alone is insufficient. Instead, growth must be integrated at the planning level with a social development agenda, which would include poverty alleviation and social protection, labor and employment, and health issues. The MSD Initiative, together with technical and advisory services offered under the ASEAN-UNDP Partnership Facility,[44] is an attempt to extend regional understandings and practices of development to include that of human/social development. These programs are vital to efforts that embed regional economic integration within a single framework that takes socio-economic governance as seriously as market integration. ASEAN also maintains collaboration with specialized UN agencies in their respective fields, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) on health matters, UNAIDS on HIV/AIDS, the United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP) on drug control, UNICEF on children's matters, and UNIFEM on women's issues.

Private Sector

ASEAN has developed strong networks with the private sector, particularly from the mid-1990s, although it has long sought inputs from the ASEAN Chambers of Commerce

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Washington DC and Wellington. Although only the European Union is an official Dialogue Partner with ASEAN, ASEAN Committees have been established in a number of individual European capitals aside from Brussels. See ASEAN Secretariat, 'ASEAN Committees in Third Countries', (www.aseansec.org/14257.htm; accessed 14 November 2003).

[43] See 'ASEAN Secretariat-World Bank Program for Mainstreaming Social Development in the National Development Agenda', (www1.worldbank.org/gdln/Courses/Course59/Introduction/247.htm; accessed 9 April 2003).

[44] See the ASEAN Secretariat press release, 'ASEAN and UNDP team up to promote regional development and integration' 18 June 2001.

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and Industry (ASEAN-CCI). Valuable suggestions from the ASEAN-CCI, in fact, went into the initial design of AFTA in the early 1990s (Bowles and MacLean, 1996). Until 2003, the main channel of private sector participation in ASEAN was through the ASEAN-CCI, whose links with ASEAN were formalized in 1996 with a Permanent ASEAN-CCI Secretariat established on the premises of the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta.[45] Since then, it has been invited to all meetings of the SEOM and relevant working groups on economic matters, while it has also been invited to AEM meetings when necessary. The ASEAN-CCI comprises the national-level chambers of commerce and industry from each of the ASEAN member countries.

At the Seventh ASEAN Summit in Brunei in 2001, the ASEAN leaders decided to establish the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ABAC) to provide private sector input into the various ASEAN programs on economic integration and economic development.[46] This is now the primary vehicle for private sector feedback and guidance to ASEAN on matters pertaining to ASEAN economic integration and ASEAN economic competitiveness. The ABAC comprises 30 prominent business leaders from the ASEAN private sectors, with three such individuals nominated from each member country.[47] The ABAC successfully convened the inaugural ASEAN Business and Investment Summit in conjunction with the Ninth ASEAN Summit in Bali in October 2003, in fulfilment of the mandate issued by the ASEAN leaders to the ABAC to convene annual business summits back-to-back with the ASEAN Leaders Summits.[48] The ABAC also presented its first report to the leaders at this time, which contained a number of recommendations on developing a vibrant and growing base of indigenous large and small ASEAN companies that would eventually form ASEAN multinationals.[49]

Other networks with the foreign private sector also exist in ASEAN, notably the US-ASEAN Business Council, the AFTA-CER Business Council (Australia and New Zealand are the two members of the Common Economic Relations, CER, grouping), and the ASEAN-China Business Council, while efforts are underway to form an ASEAN-India Business Council. Links with the business sector of key ASEAN dialogue partners are also planned.[50]

Working with Civil Society

Unlike ASEAN's links with other states, international organizations and private business, hardly any formal channels exist between ASEAN and NGOs. At least 57 NGOs are affiliated with ASEAN, but most of these are professional, industry and special interest

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[45] See ASEAN Secretariat, 'Private Sector Participation' (www.aseansec.org/10058.htm; accessed 18 November 2003).
[46] See ASEAN Secretariat, 'Opening Address by H.E. Mr Ong Keng Yong, Secretary General of ASEAN, at the Inaugural Meeting of the ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ABAC)', 10 April 2003, The ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta.
[47] ASEAN Secretariat, 'The Private Sector in ASEAN's Integration and Competitiveness Initiative: The ASEAN Business Advisory Council', (www.asean.or.id/14819.htm; accessed 18 November 2003).
[48] See Borneo Bulletin, 'Brunei: regional leaders laud ASEAN's BAC Efforts', 13 October 2003.
[49] *Ibid*.
[50] ASEAN Secretariat, 'News Release: ASEAN Business Leaders Urged to Help Promote Integration Efforts' 10 April 2003 (www.asean.or.id/14677.htm; accessed 18 November 2003).

associations that gather on an ASEAN-wide basis.[51] Nevertheless, there is considerable potential for engagement between ASEAN and civil society organizations, with some very encouraging episodes to date. A few of the 57 NGOs affiliated with ASEAN are already consulted by ASEAN on a regular basis, notably the ASEAN-CCI, the ASEAN Business Forum, as well as youth-based NGOs and those working on women's issues. For instance, NGOs attend ASEAN meetings on youth and women as observers.[52]

There is growing interest in the region about the role civil society can play in complementing the tasks of regional institutions in national, social and economic development. It is agreed that a well-conceived civil society, working in partnership with regional agencies and the business sector, is essential to successfully address regional poverty and social development in the decades ahead.

An ongoing process of dialogue and forging of working relationships between regional institutions (ASEAN and UNESCAP), civil society organizations (CSOs), and bi- and multilateral lending and development institutions (e.g. ADB) are essential for the design and implementation of social and economic development programmes in the region. These dialogues are meant to:

- identify new mechanisms that would allow CSOs to play a more active role in the design, planning and implementation of regional development programs with the particular focus on how they can play a direct role in these development projects; and

- agree upon steps that civil society organizations, government and regional agencies can take to strengthen civil society and its capacities to actively participate in regional development.

Regional institutions can play an important role in the design and implementation of social policy to CSOs only if there is a clear national political will to do so and if there is the conviction that it will lead to more efficient and effective outcomes. It is therefore critical that the civil society participants of the consultation establish good lines of communication and develop a relationship of mutual trust with senior officials responsible for social policy.

The thematic areas that need to be addressed fall within the following broad categories:

Strengthening civil society, which includes the need for systematic collection of information on the civil society sector, developing more effective means of mapping the sector; and identification of ways to build the institutional and management capabilities of CSOs as a means of improving service delivery and making them responsible to manage and implement regional programs and projects;

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[51] As at 29 August 2002. See ASEAN Secretariat, 'ASEAN-affiliated NGOs' (www.aseansec.org/12667.htm; accessed 18 November 2003.
[52] Telephone interview with senior official from the ASEAN Secretariat, 1 December 2003.

Creating an enabling legal and fiscal framework, including legal and fiscal reform that would facilitate the strengthening, financing and institutionalization of the civil society sector;

Ensuring sustainability, by identifying alternative sources of financing for social and community development programs and increasing regional volunteerism; and

Creating government/CSO partnerships, through involvement of CSOs in the design of national social policies and the management and implementation of social development programs.

The context in which the consultations can take place is one where the CSO sector is expanding rapidly and developing new coalitions and consortia for participation in a range of policy issues. Given the huge potential universe of organizations, difficult choices have to be made on which organizations and individuals would participate in the consultation process and how.

The growth in the recognition of civil society's crucial role in furthering human development initiatives is implicitly expressed in the initiatives by several regional organizations, particularly the UNDP and the ILO. In their respective programs, these regional organizations have engendered broader participatory mechanisms to facilitate the inclusion of civil society organizations, albeit on a subregional level, in the implementation of the programs. While this may be a considerable first step of civil society's role in facilitating regional cooperation, unfortunately, these initiatives only speak of civil society participation in the implementation stage of the project without perfectly elaborating on the degree of their participation and their contribution to the success of the project. The details on the extent of civil society participation, even in the programs that mentioned such participation of civil society in the implementation stage, are still wanting. In general, Southeast Asia has yet to witness regional cooperation initiatives led by civil society. Currently, there is a dearth of information as regards the role of civil society in the design and implementation of regional cooperation initiatives for human development.

Challenges of Partnerships with CSOs

At the operational level, a major challenge is to design and put into place effective operational mechanisms for regional agencies and civil society organizations to conduct joint programs. While undoubtedly more difficult in an unclear or unfavorable policy environment, a critical challenge for all future consultation processes is to find pragmatic ways for collaborative action on a wide range of national development undertakings.

What mechanisms can be developed in future consultations to increase the range of participating civil society organizations? The challenge is to expand participation in the consultations beyond primary NGOs to include other types of civil society organizations such as trade unions, universities, cooperatives, community-level grassroots groups and membership associations. This includes the need to achieve a regionally-diverse representation in the consultation process.

Governments must become sufficiently knowledgeable about the nature, scale and characteristics of domestic civil society in order to be able to assess claims of representation and include groups addressing causes that may not be covered in the consultation process. The key is not representation according to numbers but according to genuine citizen concerns.

A major challenge for the civil society organizations' participation is how they can self-regulate performance, management and governance in their sector. Guidelines need to be set in place and standards concerning transparency should be developed and widely endorsed.

E.   The Evolution of Regional Cooperation Initiatives for Human Development

The chapter provided a review of selected human development initiatives by regional and international organization operating in the Southeast Asian region. The objective was to highlight areas of human development being addressed by these institutions through the introduction and implementation of various programs in the region.

It has also elaborately discussed the pivotal role of ASEAN, with its extensive governance networks, in facilitating regional cooperation initiatives in pursuit of human development. Efforts in strengthening regional integration and cooperation by taking joint action on issues that transcend the boundaries of the member states are currently in place.

Research Gaps

At this point, however, it is important to indicate that the chapter is unable to measure the human development impact of the different regional cooperation arrangements and initiatives discussed. While every program implemented has an imbedded assessment mechanism, such performance measures do not focus on the impact on human development. The research team attempted to conduct key informant interviews with various regional program administrators to validate various research claims. Unfortunately, substantial feedback from key informants was not obtained. Moreover, the study does not cover data on organizational and administrative mechanisms of regional cooperation such as funding and alternative funding mechanisms, resource mobilization and regional governance modalities within ASEAN. Consequently, the dearth of information prevents the identification of best practices in human development initiatives at the regional-level.

Trends

While a full and rigorous assessment of the impact of these programs is still forthcoming, an initial appraisal of each serves to highlight the current efforts at utilizing regional cooperation in pursuit of human development objectives. (See Table IV.3).

Table IV.3
SUMMARY OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES
IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Human Development Dimensions	ASEAN (ASEAN Vision 2020; Hanoi Plan of Action)	ADB (Greater Mekong Subregion Program)	UNESCAP (Social Development Subprogram; Poverty and Development Subprogram; Human Dignity Initiative)	UNDP (TUGI Project; Access to Justice Initiative)	ILO (Trafficking in Children and Women Project)
Sustainability	Envisions a sustainable environment in the entire region in aid of increasing the level of human development of its people Crafted an array of programs that aim to engender a sustainable environment in Southeast Asia	Recognizes the need to balance heavy infrastructure development with the sustainability of natural resources Links sustainable development initiative to poverty reduction and social development	Established central administrative bodies, i.e. Poverty Center, in spearheading initiatives that further environmental sustainability and human development	Developed advocacy and awareness programs of good (urban) governance which include ecologically sustainable aspects	
Empowerment	Foresees greater cooperation and consultation between and among member countries Envisions an empowered society that considers the interests of the marginalized and disadvantaged sectors Encourages the opening up of avenues to foster greater and substantive participation within its member countries	Intends to foster greater and meaningful participation of project stakeholders at the national and local levels Puts emphasis on the need to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders in expressing their demands and interests Sees project stakeholders as partners and joint-implementers rather than passive beneficiaries	Involves national and local institutions, including NGOs, civil society and the private sector, in program implementation Employs participatory processes in the realization of the MDGs Recognizes and utilizes the community-experiences of UNESCAP's extensive network of institutions, including grassroots organizations	Adopted empowering mechanisms, e.g. TUGI Report Card system, in eliciting the demands and interests of various stakeholders Information dissemination as means to increase knowledge and participation of stakeholders Established avenues for disadvantaged sectors to address issues, demands and grievances, e.g. Access to Justice Initiative	Employs participatory processes in the planning and implementation at the national and local levels Strengthened the idea of stakeholder ownership in program implementation

Equity	Envisions open ASEAN societies that provide opportunities to all its people, regardless of gender, race, religion, language, or social and cultural background Created specific programs that promote better opportunities to its people, e.g. Rural Development and Poverty Eradication Program and the ASEAN Plan of Action on Social Safety Nets	Shifted direction of program interventions from purely economic to a more holistic and developmentally-oriented track Expanded scope of programs to cover skills development and health concerns of all project stakeholders	Targets community-based organizations private sector as beneficiaries of the secretariat's regional cooperation activities Aims to achieve gender equity with its internal structure, i.e. balancing gender ratio of its program staff Developed advocacy campaigns that increase the awareness of target beneficiaries on the state of poverty in the region Created a various programs, in close collaboration with national counterpart organizations, that spur equity in the region	Launched the Asia Pacific Rights and Justice Initiative that integrates the crosscutting principle of equity with access to remedies for grievances of the poor and disadvantaged people.	Women and children who were rescued from trafficking benefited from income generation schemes, educational and skills training, micro-credit and awareness-raising interventions
Productivity	Aims to create a technologically competitive manpower competent in strategic and enabling technologies Formed a host of specific programs the skills and capacity of its people, e.g. ASEAN Science and Technology Human Resource Program and ASEAN Work Programs on	Implemented various regional technical assistances (RETA) in across recipient countries Investments made on health and education services preceded skills training and higher education			Community projects prompted access to basic services, skills training and income generation of targeted beneficiaries Collaborated with international organizations that resulted into specific courses of actions

	Informal Sector Development as well as Skills Development for Out-of-School Youth				
Accountability	Identified common areas of cooperation that can foment a system of accountability amongst its member countries, e.g. environmental pollution and degradation, drug trafficking, trafficking in women and children, and other transnational crimes Aims to facilitate information exchanges across its member states on human rights fundamental freedoms in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the Vienna Declaration			Provided an elaborate discussion on the various mechanisms of strengthening the access to justice by of marginalized and disadvantaged sector by holding political leaders accountable to their actions through policy tools and networks of practioners	Facilitated government participation in the Project through issuance of decrees and provision of additional resources

Based on the review of these initiatives, various trends can be established which can form the basis of further studies on the impact of regional cooperation on human development. These trends offer much insight into the potential of regional cooperation as a critical mechanism for realizing human development objectives. These are as follows:

Greater awareness by states. The need to create enabling mechanisms that foster regional cooperation initiatives working for human development has gained ground in the region. Acting as primary players in furthering human development, states in the region are beginning to realize that they would have to create means of greater cooperation that would ultimately impinge and address human development issues within and outside their borders. These players would cooperate on issues that would have long-term, collective impacts, especially for those states that are contiguously situated to each other

(e.g. CMLV states). Some of these include issues on the environment, labor and labor migration, and health. Internally, these formal institutions of power have recognized the need to open avenues to increase the level of participation of their peoples: both for increasing the capacity of people to articulate their interests further and for officials and institutions to become responsive and accountable to the needs and demands of the people.

More players are getting involved. The presence of regional and international organizations in the region has strengthened cooperative mechanisms in the pursuit of human development. Furthermore, states are also beginning to open areas of cooperation not just among themselves but from other sectors as well. This is a result of the uneven capacities of state institutions to address human development needs. For instance, avenues for the advancement of regional cooperation for human development are already in place, such as those links between ASEAN and non-ASEAN countries, ASEAN and international/regional organizations, ASEAN and players from the private sector, and ASEAN and civil society. Greater interactions between various players in the regional, national and local players stipulate positive directions for regional cooperation for the advancement of human development.

Shifts in outlook. Previous interventions from the region are highly anchored on the idea of enabling market institutions to spur growth and development in the region. The diversity of the region, not only in terms of culture but also in terms of needs and the pace of growth, largely affects the mobilization of resources and other initiatives. Since then, interventions at the regional level have shifted from a purely economic orientation to a more holistic, developmentally-inclined track. For instance, investments coming international finance institutions, such as the ADB, have gone beyond simple livelihood projects and programs. Most of these investments have prioritized investments in skills training, capacity building, education and health.

Similarly, the establishment of holistic and developmentally-oriented benchmarks, i.e. the Millennium Development Goals and the contents Bali Concord II, manifests a strong and concerted effort on the part of regional and international organizations to realize human development initiatives.

Increasing level of stakeholdership. Regional efforts of human development initiatives identified in the study have emphasized the need of bringing-in local stakeholders in the entire process of program administration. By allowing more stakeholders to participate, both at the national and local level, a greater sense of ownership is cultivated, which in turn ensures the feasibility and success of the programs. Empowerment mechanisms and processes realized global-local nexuses in the region: i.e. strengthened the inexorable link between regional, national and ministerial players on the one hand and local and grassroots stakeholders on the other. Stakeholderism has become an essential feature of regional cooperation initiatives working for the advancement of human development in the region. In effect, regional interventions treat local key players as partners and joint-implementers rather than mere program beneficiaries. Participatory processes in the realization human development enabled various players in the local, national and regional levels to contribute to an effective implementation of all the initiatives. In particular,

most of the regional cooperation mechanisms have focused on the need strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders to articulate their interests further. Ultimately, these initiatives will lead to greater stakeholder ownership of the various programs aimed at increasing the level of human development in the region.

F.   Recommendations

The following are recommended for the enhancement of regional cooperation:

UN

- Develop mechanisms that ascertain a country's commitment to specific regional cooperation initiative, including requiring countries to formally "sign-up" for programs before their commencement.

- Countries or parties concerns must see a clear need for cooperation and have a common view of opportunities and constraints that provide the basis for joint action.   They must also share a common recognition with respect to the economic and financial conditions of individual countries in the region and their interdependence. Regional cooperation is likely to fail it parties involved seek their own interests only.

- Strong political will and good negotiating skills of the parties involved are keys to success. Participation and support from high-level government officials is essential.

- Strong linkages among the facilitators of regional cooperation such as the United Nations organizations and other regional groupings, civil society and the private sector are also crucial.

Barriers and constraining factors to adequate enhancement of regional cooperation and what UNESCAP has done to address these obstacles are:

- Asia Pacific region is extremely diverse in terms of culture, politics, and religion. Such diversity entails difficulties in promoting regional cooperation. It is an accepted fact that progress in regional cooperation in Asia has been slow compared to other regions. UNESCAP's regional coverage and perspective, convening authority and multidisciplinary nature provide unique comparative advantages to promote mutual cooperation and understanding among countries in the region.

- The extent of interdependence among countries brought about by globalization is also enhancing regional cooperation. For example, the spillover and contagion brought about by the Asian crisis in 1997.

Other modalities for the secretariat to enhance regional cooperation for human development are:

- Policy advocacy and dialogue on global and regional commitments and critical emerging issues that need the urgent attention of its members.

- Regional knowledge networking to enable its members and associate members to share and discuss information and experiences on good and innovative practices and detect common social problems. Regional cooperation is enhanced when problems or issues addressed are of mutual interest among all parties.

- Training advisory services and other technical assistance aimed at strengthening the abilities of its members and associate members to formulate and implement effective policies and programs. In particular, UNESCAP focuses on the following broad areas of capability development: (i) Negotiating effectively in multilateral and regional forums by strengthening the weakening position of developing countries in international negotiations; (ii) Implementing commitments resulting from global and regional conferences; (iii) Formulating and implementing effective policies, and legal and regulatory frameworks; (iv) Building and managing partnerships with civil society, including the private sector; and (v) Monitoring progress in achieving the goals and targets of major UN global and regional conferences.

ASEAN

It appears that the prospects for meaningful regional cooperation in ASEAN, particularly in the area of human development, are sound. A number of critical and pragmatic recommendations to further facilitate ASEAN's role as an institution for regional cooperation are identified.

- First, the pro-active role of the ASEAN Secretariat needs to be further strengthened by ensuring there is sufficient professional staff to enable the Secretariat to further strengthen its efforts at identifying and designing innovative but necessary projects, especially in the area of social development. At present, much of the attention of the Secretariat is on regional economic integration, which is to be expected in view of the ASEAN Economic Community project and the recognition by member states that regional economic integration is one crucial means to meet the competitive challenges of economic globalization. Social development, although increasingly emphasized, needs further strengthening. It especially needs to be integrated more fully with the economic integration agenda and human development goals need to be incorporated in policies and programs through the development of appropriate indicators.

- Second, efforts to finance social development projects need to be further strengthened and to arrive at a viable source of funding for ASEAN cooperation on social development. Such an effort would expand the range of funding sources for ASEAN and reduce the Association's current over-dependence on dialogue partners for funding, though the latter should remain an important funding avenue for the region. There is a need to concretize the commitments of ASEAN countries in advancing the successes gained from the various initiatives already in place. Ways of augmenting financial support coming from member countries should be explored and immediately realized.

- Third, ASEAN must develop better links with regional and domestic NGOs. As already noted, some form of institutionalized engagement with NGOs working with local communities can be helpful in providing early warnings of local concerns, which if unchecked have the potential to undermine social and domestic stability. By developing such networks, ASEAN also enables local participation of institutional projects through local consultations and inputs.

- Finally, close attention must be given to instrumental framing, which is a useful method for getting member governments to consider placing new issue areas and programs on the ASEAN agenda and acting on them. Framing, a way of presenting an issue, can convey controversial or novel ideas in a non-threatening way to member governments and other stakeholders. Framing helps actors such as policymakers recognize the worth of such ideas and programs, thereby facilitating their adoption, particularly if the framing process highlights the implications of their non-adoption. It will be especially important in issue areas such as social development, which remains a relatively novel area for some governments and an issue for which new approaches to cooperation need to be adopted. It could, therefore, be used to propose new modalities of cooperation, such as involving NGO and local community participation to which some member governments may be averse. The professional expertise of the ASEAN Secretariat, if freed up further from administrative tasks, can contribute in moving ASEAN along areas of cooperation that emphasize human development/security concerns and to adopt new modalities of cooperation, including consultation with NGOs. By doing so, ASEAN can enhance its own institutional legitimacy and accountability to more than just the elites of Southeast Asia, consequently fulfilling its aim of becoming truly an ASEAN Community.

A shift away from the ASEAN norms of consultation, consensus and non-interference is not recommended. It is not the presence of these norms that inhibits meaningful cooperation. Instead, it is the absence of shared interests in a particular issue area, or a lower priority accorded to an issue area by some members, that impedes cooperation. In such instances, the ASEAN norms are often employed to justify or rationalize non-action or slow/limited cooperation. The norms do not necessarily *cause* weak cooperation. Where there are convergent interests, the ASEAN norms have not posed a hindrance to effective cooperation. In many instances, member governments have chosen to move

away from these norms if such a shift is seen as enabling meaningful cooperation. In fact, the commitment to consensus and flexibility has helped to secure commitment to cooperation in areas where domestic incentives work against joint action, albeit at a slower pace or lower level of compliance. What is recommended, therefore, is to focus attention on the instrumental framing of issues as a means of altering the hierarchy of interests amongst ASEAN members and more attention to human development outcomes. For a meaningful common regional assessment and development, and human development outcome framework, there is a need for mapping of the regional initiatives encompassed by regional institutions to enhance complementation and identify the respected niche of each organization. Helping to raise the priority accorded by member governments to particular issue areas, cooperative programs and modalities of cooperation will be more fundamental in ensuring successful cooperation.

G.   Conclusion

This chapter has presented the different regional initiatives aimed at furthering human development in Southeast Asia. In course of the discussions, the report showed that these initiatives are traversing a similar path and have elicited several commonalities. In particular, four major trends in an attempt to chart the direction of human development initiatives have been established based on these commonalities. To this end, the report argues that despite being in their incipient stages, human development initiatives in the region appear to be positive and promising as regards the impact of regional cooperation mechanisms for human development.

In the final analysis, the report argues that the pursuit of human development should never be the sole endeavor of states. A multi-stakeholder approach to human development must be employed by regional human development initiatives, wherein various stakeholders at the local, national and regional levels cooperate on the basis of realizing the various dimensions of human development.

However, the report also admits that there is much to ascertain as regards the impact of regional cooperation on the advancement of human development in Southeast Asia. Consequently, these regional human development initiatives have elicited two possible areas of further study. One area deals with the trend of sustained openness and cooperation on the part of political and economic institutions in the region as regards the pursuit of human development. The other deals extent by which other regional initiatives are planned, structured and implemented.

Indeed, human development is all about people as well as the expansion of their choices so that they may have greater control of their lives. Regional cooperation mechanisms for human development in Southeast Asia have posited a considerable start for realizing the various dimensions of human development. As development issues transcend the boundaries of states in the region, greater impetus on the part of regional players to cooperate and collaborate in effort to address these issues shall continue to take place. It is highly imperative that regional players, as well as other regional human development initiatives that are yet to be forged, sustain the successes of the various initiatives identified in the study. People will have choices that impact on their lives when states and

other regional players have consciously and continuously exerted efforts of expanding their scope of human development and realizing this scope into concrete and measurable initiatives.

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