

## **ASEAN MARKS 40 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP WITH CANADA**

6 March 2017 – The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) conveys its warmest greetings to the Government and people of Canada on the occasion of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ASEAN-Canada Dialogue relations.

Since the first formal meeting of ASEAN Directors-General and Canada Senior Officials on Economic Cooperation held in Manila on 3-4 February 1977, ASEAN-Canada relations have developed in all three ASEAN Community pillars. Canada has demonstrated active engagement in the Southeast Asian region, including through ASEAN's mechanisms such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). The Joint Declaration on the ASEAN-Canada Enhanced Partnership adopted in 2009 frames current engagement in a comprehensive, action-oriented and forward-looking manner alongside a Plan of Action for 2016-2020 that guides concrete cooperation between both sides.

Both ASEAN and Canada have been committed to addressing common traditional and non-traditional challenges, upholding international law, and maintaining peace and security in the region. ASEAN values Canada's commitments and interests in further strengthening relations with ASEAN as well as its continued support for ASEAN Centrality and community building efforts.

Economic links between ASEAN and Canada exhibit a steady, positive trajectory. Two-way trade continues to expand, while Canadian direct investment in ASEAN exceeds that in some neighbouring economies. ASEAN lauds the Canada-ASEAN Business Council (CABC) for channeling private sector attention to business and investment opportunities in ASEAN's ten member states.

While fostering economic integration for mutual benefit and prosperity, ASEAN-Canada socio-cultural engagement continues to grow. Canadian funds support the implementation of various initiatives on disaster management, climate change, health and pandemics, education, youth, culture and people-to-people exchange as well as human rights of migrant workers, women and children.

This 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary coincides with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ASEAN's establishment, which is a testament to the long-standing relations between ASEAN and Canada. We recognize Canada's diplomatic presence in all ASEAN Member States as a demonstration of its commitment to the region.

In the course of 2017, ASEAN welcomes commemorative activities to celebrate 40 years of flourishing relations with Canada and the successful convening of the 14<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-Canada Dialogue to be held in Ottawa in May 2017. We are confident that in years to come Canada will continue to be a reliable and constructive partner both in supporting the ASEAN-centred regional architecture in the Asia-Pacific, and realizing ASEAN's Community Vision 2025 and its Blueprints.

ASEAN looks forward to exploring new opportunities for future cooperation with Canada to realize the full potential of our partnership and further contribute to peace, stability, prosperity and sustainable development in the ASEAN region.