

Thailand and Vietnam met in Kuala Lumpur on 17 June 1996 and agreed the following basic objectives for the Group: to co-operate in the economic and social development of the Mekong Basin area and strengthen the link between it and ASEAN member countries, through a process of dialogue and common project identification.

Priorities include: development of infrastructure capacities in the fields of transport, telecommunications, irrigation and energy; development of trade and investment-generating activities; development of the agricultural sector to enhance production for domestic consumption and export; sustainable development of forestry resources and development of mineral resources; development of the industrial sector, especially small to medium enterprises; development of tourism; human resource development and support for training; co-operation in the fields of science and technology.

#### Further Reading

- Broinowski, A., *Understanding ASEAN*. London, 1982.—(ed.) *ASEAN into the 1990s*. London, 1990  
 Van Hoa, Tran, (ed.) *Economic Developments and Prospects in the ASEAN*. London, 1997  
 Wawn, B., *The Economics of the ASEAN Countries*. London, 1982

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## Colombo Plan

*History.* Founded in 1950 to promote the development of newly independent Asian member countries, the Colombo Plan has grown from a group of seven Commonwealth nations into an organization of 24 countries. Originally the Plan was conceived for a period of six years. This was renewed from time to time until the Consultative Committee gave the Plan an indefinite life span in 1980.

*Members.* Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Fiji Islands, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, South Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, USA and Vietnam.

*Aims.* The aims of the Colombo Plan are: (1) to provide a forum for discussion, at local level, of development needs; (2) to facilitate development assistance by encouraging members to participate as donors and recipients of technical co-operation; and (3) to execute programmes to advance development within member countries. The Plan currently has the following programmes: Programme for Public Administration (PPA); South-South Technical Co-operation Data Bank Programme (SSTC/DB); Drug Advisory Programme (DAP); Programme for Private Sector Development (PPSD); Colombo Plan Staff College for Technician Education (CPSC).

*Structure.* The Consultative Committee is the principal policy-making body of the Colombo Plan. Consisting of all member countries, it meets every two years to review the economic and social progress of members, exchange views on technical co-operation programmes and generally review the activities of the Plan. The Colombo Plan Council represents each member government and meets several times a year to identify development issues, recommend measures to be taken and ensure implementation.

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*Publications.* *Consultative Committee Meeting—Proceedings and Conclusions* (biennial); *Report of the Colombo Plan Council* (annual); *The Colombo Plan Brochure* (annual); *The Colombo Plan Focus* (quarterly newsletter); *South-South Technical Co-operation in Selected Member Countries*.

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## Economic Co-operation Organization (ECO)

The Economic Co-operation Organization (ECO) is an intergovernmental regional organization established in 1985 by Iran, Pakistan and Turkey. ECO is the successor of the Regional Co-operation for Development (RCD). ECO was later expanded in 1992 to include seven new members: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The objectives of the organization, stipulated in its Charter, the Treaty of Izmir, include the promotion of conditions for sustained economic growth in the region. While transport and communications, trade and investment, and energy are the high priority areas in ECO's scheme of work, other fields of co-operation such as industry, agriculture, health, science and education, drug control and human development are also on the agenda.

While summit meetings lend reaffirmation of the high level commitment of ECO member states to the goals and objectives of the organization, the Council of Ministers (COM) remains the highest policy and decision-making body of the organization, which meets at least once a year and is chaired by rotation among the member states.

ECO Summits were instituted with the First Summit held in Tehran in 1992; the Second Summit was held in Istanbul in 1993, the Third in Islamabad in 1995, the Fourth in Ashgabat in 1996, the Fifth in Almaty in May 1999, the Sixth in Tehran in 2000, the Seventh in Istanbul in 2002, the Eighth in Dushanbe in 2004 and the Ninth in Baku in 2006.

The long-term perspectives and priorities of ECO are defined in the form of two Action Plans: the Quetta Plan of Action and the Istanbul Declaration and Economic Co-operation Strategy.

ECO enjoys observer status with the United Nations, World Trade Organization and the Organization of Islamic Conference.

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## Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)

In Oct. 2000 the South Pacific Forum changed its name to the Pacific Islands Forum. As the South Pacific Forum it held its first meeting of Heads of Government in New Zealand in 1971. The Agreement Establishing the Forum Secretariat defines the membership of the Forum and the Secretariat. Decisions are reached by consensus. The administrative arm of the Forum, known officially as the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, is based in Suva, Fiji. In Oct. 1994 the Forum was granted observer status to the UN.

*Members.* (2007) Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. In 1999 the French territory of New Caledonia was