

Asean and history of cambodias membership



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Establishment

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok by the five original members namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. By the following year, Brunei Darussalam joined on 8 January 1984, Vietnam on 28 July 1995, Myanmar on 23 July 1997, and Cambodia which is the last member joined on 30 April 1999. At that time, the ASEAN was founded as a loose organization. ASEAN based on three basic principles: respect for state sovereignty, nonintervention, and renunciation of the threat or use of force in resolving disputes. Thus, ASEAN did not base on its foundation or principle of formal dispute-resolution mechanisms. As a result, it was not a collective security arrangement. The founders did not want ASEAN to be mistaken for a military grouping among political allies as some of its ineffective predecessors had been.

ASEAN's original objectives were to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region, and to promote regional peace and stability within the region. In doing so, it sought to respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among member countries in the region, and adhering to the principles of the United Nations Charter.

History of membership

ASEAN foreign ministers held a three-hour meeting in Kuala Lumpur On July 10, 1997, and they decided to keep Cambodia out of the club because of the political crisis in the country.

The conflict between factions of Cambodia's two co-prime minister shattered a tenuous peace in Phnom Penh and countryside. This is the reason that destroyed the chance of becoming a part of regional cooperation in ASEAN.

In December 1995, at the fifth ASEAN Summit in Bangkok, head of state from Cambodia, Burma, and Laos, signed a Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone. Moreover, by signing the treaty represents the participant in ASEAN project before achieving membership status.

Cambodia was on track for entry into ASEAN in 1996. Along with Cambodia, Burma, Lao submitted applications for membership and planned to join during the 30th anniversary celebration. In November, the First Informal ASEAN Summit in Jakarta, ASEAN heads announced that they would allow all three countries to be the member of ASEAN unless they participate in ASEAN activities, in doing so, the three countries will become the full member effective immediately.

Cambodia was optimistic that the day of regional isolation was finally coming to an end. However, Cambodia's membership in the regional body was in doubt came when the Indonesia foreign minister Ali Alatas hesitated to say that Cambodia was ready for entry in July 1997 in the condition that Cambodia would have meet several ASEAN criteria for entry and prove that it was able to meet the terms with other members.

To become ASEAN member, Cambodia was required to meet a schedule for reducing customs tariffs from rate of up to 30 percent to 0 to 5 percent. In addition, Cambodia needs to reduce tariffs on foreign goods as well in order to comply with a timetable for the ASEAN Free Trade Area.

Unfortunately, on March 30, 1997, the violence that would ultimately delay Cambodia's ASEAN entry began when at least 19 people were death and 125 were wounded after the attack of opposition party demonstration near the National Assembly in Phnom Penh.

When this political crisis occurred, Cambodia's admission to ASEAN would be a burden not only for its people, but for the rest of the association as well if Cambodia cannot clean up its political crisis and economic reforms immediately. By the end of April, senior Philippine Foreign Ministry official were suggesting that political tension in Cambodia might challenge its chances of ASEAN acceptance. By the following months, 10 members study mission to Cambodia to assess the situation. They warned that recent developments have given rise to growing concern that Cambodia may be in danger of relapsing into another round of prolonged and useless violence which will threat to ASEAN reputation.

However, Malaysia Prime Minister has announced that Cambodia should be admitted to ASEAN once it can maintain political stability in the region and follow the democracy by respecting human rights while the other two nations, Laos and Burma, joined ASEAN as planned, but fighting again isolated Cambodia from the rest of the bloc.

In September 1998, ASEAN decided to disband the Troika which has established after the 1997 conflict, but ASEAN still stood firm on its assertion that no date would be set for Cambodia to enter the association until a new government was formed. In November, a new coalition government was

finally formed when Funcinpec announced it would support a parliamentary vote of confidence for Hun Sen as prime minister.

In early December 1998, Cambodia affirmed in a new coalition government four months after the general election. Thus, Hun Sen became sole prime minister and Prince Ranariddh became president of the National Assembly.

Finally, Cambodia got the nod from ASEAN at a two-day summit in Hanoi later in December. At the summit, ASEAN leaders said they would admit Cambodia, though a date for a formal ceremony had not been set. As a result, Cambodia became the full membership of ASEAN on 30 April, 1999.

II. The Challenges of Cambodia's ASEAN Membership

Cambodia's plans to join the Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) have faced major challenges and setbacks over the past year. Although the timing of Cambodia's admission into ASEAN remains unsettled, neither ASEAN nor Cambodia has seriously questioned its eventual entry into the regional grouping. Indeed, the new ASEAN logo includes 10 rice stalks to signify the eventual membership of all 10 nations in Southeast Asia. The only question that remains at the political level is the timing of Cambodia's entry.

While Cambodia's membership in ASEAN in as event, Cambodia's integration with ASEAN is a process that will continue for many years. Integrating with ASEAN will require far-ranging adjustments. I would focus on two areas in which ASEAN membership will bring long-term change to Cambodia are institutional building and legal reform. These two areas are vital to Cambodia's regional economic integration. The first, institutional reform addresses the structure and operation of the public sector. For example, how

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the government will carry out its responsibilities in managing the country's economic development as well as ASEAN integration. The second is legal reform involves the basic rules that will govern Cambodia's economic development and also its participation in ASEAN.

Institutional Reform

In many respects, the biggest challenges posed by ASEAN membership are institutional in nature. Effective participation in ASEAN requires a high level of intra governmental communication and coordination. Putting aside areas of functional cooperation, ASEAN economic cooperation alone covers a broad and varied range of activities and initiatives, many of which are inter related and highly technical in nature. For example, ASEAN's framework Agreement on Enhancing Economic Cooperation maps out future economic cooperation in intellectual property and technology transfer, Customs, tariffs, non-tariffs barriers, investments, trade, industrial development, energy, finance, tourism, services, agriculture and transportation. More specific agreements for many of these areas have already been included, and even more specific action plans and memoranda of understanding are being drafted. Moreover, the scope of ASEAN's economic cooperation is expanding each year.

Remaining effectively engaged in this process is a continuous challenge for each ASEAN government. For Cambodia, which has thin human and financial resources, this will test the government's ability to manage and implement ASEAN's economic cooperation.

Another challenge is increasing the transparency of the process of government decision making in Cambodia. Transparency of laws and

procedure is an explicit requirement of all ASEAN members. Indeed, Cambodia will sign documents for admission into ASEAN that will include specific commitments on transparency. Such transparency requires government's procedures and laws to both be disseminated and consistently followed by the government. It also means that the written legal procedures for decision making used by government bodies must be consistent and respected.

Legal Reforms related to ASEAN

When speaking about the legal implications of ASEAN membership, there are two separate questions that must be addressed. First, what are the legal requirements for entry into ASEAN? Second, what are the legal implications, if any of membership?

Cambodia which is a newest member is an economy in transition, seeking to transform itself from a command oriented system into a market oriented system. This process requires a parallel transformation of Cambodia's legal system to provide the legal infrastructure for a market economy driven by the private sector.

Indeed, reforming Cambodia's legal system is connected more to Cambodia's larger ambitions for economic growth and development than it is to be requirements for participation in ASEAN. In truth, the long-term success of Cambodia's economic transition and growth, not to mention its ability to benefit from ASEAN membership, is linked to the complete renovation and strengthening of its legal infrastructure.

It is thus incorrect to say that entry into ASEAN has no legal impact on Cambodia. The expansion and deepening of ASEAN economic cooperation has a real practical effect on the development of laws in each ASEAN member country, and ASEAN membership will have serious consequences for Cambodia's law reform efforts. Once Cambodia accedes to the various ASEAN economic agreements, and it will be obliged to enact domestic legislation in order to implement many of agreement. Such domestic laws provide a legal framework for ASEAN economic cooperation. Even where ASEAN agreements contain no binding legal commitments, they can put pressure on member countries to reform laws to comply with the spirit and objectives of such agreements.

Thus, the main result of ASEAN membership may be to push Cambodia to enact more far-ranging legal reforms with even greater speed. It is also likely to encourage greater transparency in the creation, application and enforcement of its laws.

Conclusion

With the globalization of the world economy a fact of life, countries are locked in an unending Competition for trade and investment. And in many ways, the economic success of countries in transition such as Cambodia is closely connected to their ability to build comparative advantages in their institutional and legal frameworks. ASEAN membership provides one more reason why Cambodia should become one part of regional integration.

III. Regional Integration for Sustainable Development

Cambodia embarked on its transitional from a command to a market oriented economy in the midst of the globalization of the world economy. It has already taken extensive unilateral liberalization measure in trade and investment in the past few years. Although full membership of the ASEAN was temporarily postponed in July 1997, Cambodia is still committed to integrate itself with the ASEAN economies. The government has also taken steps to join the WTO, preparing for its accession in the future. Cambodia is without doubt accelerating the pace of its integration with the regional and world economies.

The challenges of economic integration

Regional economic integration is not a goal but a mean to raise the living standard of the Cambodian people which is the ultimate goal of sustainable development. Although economic integration is expected to bring new opportunities for Cambodia, also poses new challenges for policy makers. The challenges are enormous particularly as the capacity and experience of managing and integrated market economy are still being developed. Some developing countries have benefited enormously from integrating themselves with the world economy in the last three decades. Policy maker in these countries managed to successfully translate the benefits of economic integration into raising their people's standard of living. A large number of developing countries, however, have not reached the same level of success. Some have apparently failed to translate the force of globalisation and integration into development of their countries. However,

Cambodia has to improve some challenges as being directly associated with the objectives of sustainable development.

The first challenge is to achieve high economic growth with equity.

Cambodia's development will not become sustainable unless the benefits of regional integration and economic growth are shared by all particularly by the poor. A key policy to maintain equity is public investment in universal education, health and nutrition. Public investment in education and health in Cambodia has been much lower than those ASEAN countries in recent years. A challenge to the government is, therefore, how to mobilize and use limited public resources effectively to fill the existing human resources gap between Cambodia and ASEAN countries.

The second challenge is to promote agricultural and rural development.

Agricultural product is already included in the CEPT scheme under AFTA, and will thus be exposed to competition with the ASEAN economies in the long term. However, Cambodia farmer have been facing several serious constrains such as access to various inputs, finance, technology and information. Cambodia has not yet revealed its comparative advantage in agricultural products where the country's potential comparative advantage appears to exist. A major challenge to the government is how to articulate AFTA/CEPT strategies to facilitate agricultural and rural development.

The third challenge is industrial and service sector development. These sectors have been leading sectors for economic growth since the beginning of liberalization and the transition to a market economy. The nature of these challenges to the government is therefore different from that in the other

sectors. The government should ensure that the development of these sectors actually contributes to raising the standard of living of the Cambodian people. Setting quality standards for goods and services is a critical role for the government to make market mechanisms work better.

Foreign trade and investment

The essence of the CEPT scheme under the AFTA agreements is the reduction and elimination of import tariff on trade in goods within the ASEAN region in the coming 10 to 15 years. The reduction of import tariffs will change incentives for producers in each country and affect the volume and pattern of foreign trade in the region. It will also influence the pattern of foreign investment. It is important, therefore, to understand the characteristics of foreign trade and investment for Cambodia's policy making toward ASEAN/ AFTA.

There are two main finding regarding to the current patterns of foreign trade and investment in Cambodia. First, ASEAN countries were by far the largest trading partner with as well as the largest investors in Cambodia. This indicates that Cambodia's membership in ASEAN and AFTA is likely to have significant economic implication for Cambodia. Second, Cambodia's revealed comparative advantage was shown to lie in natural resource based products like rubber, wood, and timber and labor intensive manufacturing products refer to garments. A comparison with neighboring indicates, however, that Cambodia's potential comparative advantage may lie in agricultural and agro-processing products, an area which has not yet been well developed.

Conclusion

Key factors in articulating regional integration policies in Cambodia are policy coherence and coordination. The multi dimensional objectives of sustainable development require the government to articulate integration policies which are coherent with other policies serving different objective. Policy coherence will not emerge without coordination between the ministries, and also coordination between the private and public sector. Cambodia's regional integration will contribute most effectively and efficiently to sustainable development if these conditions are met.

IV. Benefits of becoming ASEAN member

Since being ASEAN membership, Cambodia attached great importance to the relations with ASEAN member countries, and regarded ASEAN as a strategic window of opportunities to regain its regional role as well as promote its national interests. Surprisingly, Cambodia has received many benefits in term of economics, politics, and security.

First of all, Cambodia has developed its economics rapidly after becoming ASEAN member. Regarding to economic term, Foreign Direct Investment has flowed in investment form ASEAN to Cambodia significantly since 1999. For instance, Cambodia has been fully integrated in the ASEAN + 3 (China, Japan, and South Korea) process since it took part in its first ASEAN + 3 summit in Manila in 1999. Furthermore, the ASEAN Free Trade Area which was launch in 1992 with the objective to create single production and market place of the region to be competitive in the world market is another economic advantage for Cambodia. According to AFTA, Cambodia as well as the rest of the ASEAN members has enjoyed the free flow of goods, services,

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trade, and investment by reducing and eliminating the tariff barrier properly. However, toward reducing a high tariff, ASEAN has established the Common Effective Preferential Tariff, which is known as CEPT Scheme; in order to increase intra ASEAN trade, increase region's competitive edge, and attract more foreign investment. Thought out CEPT Scheme, Cambodia has received many benefits. For example, FDI from Japan has been flow swiftly to Cambodia in the figure of \$3. 5 million in 2004 and \$30. 9 million in 2007. Despite the FDI, Cambodia has also exported products increasingly not only in the region but also in the whole world market. Even though, the CEPT Scheme is going to eliminate of all imports duties by 2015 for Cambodia.

Secondly, ASEAN has also created politic settlements to Cambodia. In the ground of politics, Cambodia has received many opportunities in the world prestige. Specifically, in 2004, Cambodia has become a full member of World Trade Organization. Besides Cambodia has jointed many important international meeting such as ASEAN Summit and ASEAN Ministerial which help Cambodia to increase confidence in the international community. In addition, ASEAN charter has playing a very essential role in facilitating the political conflicts by peaceful method of Cambodia among ASEAN membership. In accordance with the ASEAN charter, which is served as a legal document, Cambodia has taken pleasure in promoting human right and democracy. What is more, in the first ASEAN Summit in Bali in February 1976, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation was found in order to spell out the relation with one another. Cambodia has been respected its sovereignty and non inference by other countries as a result of TAC. In adding together, Cambodia never experienced in the threat or use of force with the ASEAN

member state as well as the other countries since joining the TAC. All in all, Cambodia, as one member of ASEAN, has been enormously in achieving on political stability and collaboration as we can see the mentioned points above.

Last but not least, security is another imperative advantage. As we can see, before being as ASEAN member, Cambodia has never obtained both state and human security notably. For instance, in the late 1970s, Cambodia used to have disputes and use of arm force with Vietnam; nonetheless, as a result of being an ASEAN membership, ASEAN factor has convinced both parties to settle the dispute peacefully. As a consequence, Cambodia has strengthened its relation with its relation with its neighboring countries especially with Vietnam. Besides, concerning to human security of Cambodia as well the other members, ASEAN has been taken into consideration seriously. In fact, ASEAN has helped Cambodia extensively to control, detect, and prevent the spread of diseases such as bird flu, swine flu, by providing experts and sharing information. Hence, Cambodia had contained all those infections successfully. In spite of pandemic, ASEAN also has helped Cambodia to work out effectively with many transnational crimes such as human trafficking, drug trafficking, and pedophilia. Due to the fact that ASEAN always concerns about every common regional issue, ASEAN tries hardly to find resolution. Actually, ASEAN has established many programs and actions in providing information exchange, law enforcement, and institutional capacity building in order combat transnational crime. More recognizing, there are many basic frameworks for regional cooperation on fighting transnational crime such as the ASEAN Ministers Meeting and Senior Official Meeting at least once a year.

According to all above actions, Cambodia and also other members in ASEAN have abolished the transnational crimes from year to year.

In conclusion, with its accession to ASEAN, Cambodia believes it can redefined its political and economic position in the region and begin to take advantages of its enormous economic potential, as well as benefit from regional cooperation through the assistance of various dialogue partners of this regional group.

V. Conclusion

By representing the history of membership since before Cambodia becoming a member of ASEAN until present day, we can see that even though Cambodia has met a few challenges such as institutional reform, legal reform, and economic integration so on and so forth, Cambodia has achieved many benefits in term of economies, politic, security, and external relation. What is more, Cambodia attached great importance to the relations with ASEAN member countries, and regarded ASEAN as a strategic window of opportunities to regain its regional role as well as promote its national interests.

The royal government of Cambodia will continue to push for the integration of Cambodia into the region and the world, specially focusing on bridging the development gaps among the member countries of the ASEAN. By acting more effectively in regional and international politics, Cambodia has raised its regional diplomatic profile, as well as its influences as an active participant in ASEAN summits and annual ministerial meetings. In recent years, Cambodia has accelerated the speed of trade liberalization and free

flows of goods and services both within the country and between Cambodia and other key partners in the region and the rest of the world.

With its accession to ASEAN, Cambodia believes it can redefined its political and economic position in the region and begin to take advantages of its enormous economic potential, as well as benefits from regional cooperation through the assistance of various dialogue partners of this regional group. By facing a future with confidence, ASEAN never be tired in putting the hard commitment to the ASEAN goal of 2015, ASEAN community. However, if ASEAN community will not reach by 2015, it does not mean that the community is unsuccessful of failed. In contrast, 2015 is not the end of the road; it is just the beginning which is a commitment to persuade all ASEAN members try hard to develop their countries. In addition, no matter it achieves or not, the main point is to move on and cooperate together.

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