

52_HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Three countries taken up on 7-8 July 2003 in Kuala Lumpur; (c) improvement of the existing ASEAN-disease-surveillance.net website and setting up of an ASEAN Plus Three homepage to disseminate information on SARS epidemiology, prevention and control; and (d) formulation of a long-term ASEAN Plus Three work plan for strengthening surveillance of new and emerging diseases.

ASEAN and China are finalizing the rules of procedure for the ASEAN-China Special Health Fund that would provide necessary resources for concerted regional action in strengthening health cooperation in the area of public health, in particular to prevent and control the spread of epidemics such as SARS and Avian Influenza.

The ASEAN Plus Three countries, with assistance from AusAID, have completed an integrated action plan entitled "ASEAN Plus Three Emerging and Resurging Infections Surveillance and Response Program" (AERISRP). The goal of the program is to increase the effectiveness of regional surveillance and the early warning and response to emerging and resurging infectious diseases through strengthening of national and regional capacity for epidemiological surveillance, early warning response, routine diagnosis, laboratory based surveillance, and rapid response. The ASEAN Health Ministers have agreed on the inclusion of a component of Avian Flu in the AERISRP as recommended by the Intersessional ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Program-Regional Partnership Scheme (AADCP-RPS) Joint Selection and Review Panel (JSRP).

Food Safety

The ASEAN Health Ministers have adopted the ASEAN Food Safety Improvement Plan as proposed by the ASEAN Expert Group on Food Safety. The Plan includes cooperative activities in (a) legislation; (b) laboratories; (c) monitoring and surveillance; (d) implementation of food safety programmes; (e) food inspection and certification; (f) education and training; (g) information sharing; (h) research and

development; (i) international participation; and (j) consumer participation in food safety.

HIV/AIDS

The 11th Meeting of the ASEAN Task Force on AIDS (ATFOA), held in Bali on 16-17 October 2003, reviewed the implementation of the ASEAN Work Programme on HIV/AIDS II (AWP II). The following activities were undertaken over the past year: (a) ASEAN- United Nation Development Program (UNDP) Meeting on Building HIV Resilience along the Stretch of the ASEAN Highway, which was held in Bangkok on 13-15 October 2003; (b) Meeting to Review the ASEAN-WHO MOU, held in Jakarta on 19 December 2003, which agreed to set up a joint working group between WHO and the ASEAN Secretariat among others; and (c) Consultation Meeting to Review the MOU among the Greater Mekong Sub-region Countries, held in Yangon on 16-17 February 2004, which led to the extension of the MOU and Joint Action Programme (2004-2009).

Other activities included (a) the Workshop to Establish ASEAN-China AIDS Laboratory Network, held in Beijing on in April 2004, with a view to promote technical cooperation and exchange of information; (b) extension of financial support by United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) to fund the implementation of activities under AWP II; (c) ASEAN-Rockefeller Foundation project on Intellectual Property Law Review and Capacity Building on IPRs related to Public Health in the ASEAN Region; and (d) United States Agency for International Development (USAID) financial support for ASEAN activities in HIV/AIDS.

5. LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

ASEAN continues to undertake activities to address the labour and employment impact of globalisation and trade liberalisation, including preparing the region's workers to take full advantage of the socio-economic opportunities they bring. ASEAN aims



ASEAN is working with The International Labour Organisation to carry out a research project on the labour and employment implications of AFTA and other trade liberalisation.

to adopt an integrated approach to social protection towards assisting the workers to cope with changes brought about by industrial restructuring as a result of closer regional economic integration. To ensure that workers' skills and capabilities remain relevant to changing industrial needs, and to tap the vast potential of ASEAN's human resources, projects are being carried out to enhance mutual skills recognition in ASEAN and to facilitate labour mobility in the region.

The ASEAN-commissioned study on "Liberalizing and Facilitating the Movement of Natural Persons under the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (AFAS): Implications for Labour and Immigration Policies and Procedures in ASEAN" has been completed. The policy recommendations

are now under consideration by appropriate bodies in ASEAN. This study received technical support from the ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Programme (AADCP) Regional Economic Policy Support Facility. The AADCP is also extending assistance in the project Enhancing Skills Recognition Systems in ASEAN.

Moreover, under the ASEAN Programme on Industrial Relations, two out of three recommended policy workshops were conducted, namely "Fundamental Framework of Industrial Relations and Legislation" held in Tokyo, Japan from 8 to 9 July 2003 and "Wages, Productivity and Industrial Relations" held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 8 to 9 March 2004. These workshops provided recommendations for inclusion in the draft "ASEAN Regional Work Programme on Industrial Relations." These initiatives received financial and technical support from Japan.

ASEAN is working with the International Labour Organisation to carry out a research project on the labour and employment implications of AFTA and other trade liberalisation. The ASEAN Secretariat is currently matching the project's priorities with the identified activities under the ASEAN-UNDP Partnership Facility.

Since 2001, ASEAN and China have held a series of high-level seminars on Social Security: Opportunities and Challenges in the Field of Social Security in the 21st Century with a view to come up with policy recommendations on short-term social safety nets, health insurance, unemployment insurance, disability insurance and pensions in ASEAN Member Countries and China. The third seminar will be held in 2004 to discuss the impact of trade liberalisation and globalisation on employment and social security systems; the impact of population ageing on the social security systems, particularly with respect to matters concerning financial sustainability (such as pension insurance coverage), and active labour market policies to enhance employment opportunities.

54_HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The ASEAN Occupational Safety and Health Network (ASEAN-OSHNET) is preparing a successor strategic Plan of Action for the period 2004-2007. The implementation of the new ASEAN-OSHNET Plan of Action will coincide with the rotation of the ASEAN-OSHNET Secretariat and its Executive Director from Indonesia to Malaysia. The ASEAN-OSHNET addresses regional capacity-building on OSH expertise and experience-sharing on OSH issues through information exchange, training, research, standard, and inspection.

The ASEAN Plan of Action on Informal Sector Development will be operationalized in 2004. It will start with an activity to produce best practice framework for informal sector development in ASEAN.

6. EDUCATION

The activities of the ASEAN Committee on Education and the ASEAN University Network complement ongoing regional initiatives to promote ASEAN awareness, solidarity and identity.

Promoting ASEAN Awareness in Schools

The Second Meeting of ASEAN Committee on Education (ASCOE), held on 20-22 October 2003 in Indonesia, considered a concept for an ASEAN workplan to promote ASEAN awareness in schools.

The ASCOE flagship project, ASEAN Students Exchange Programme at the Secondary School Level, is a cost-shared project hosted by rotation among ASEAN Member Countries. The fourth programme was held in Indonesia in October 2003. The Philippines will host the fifth exchange programme in 2004.

The ASEAN Mathematics and Science Olympiad, another cost-shared activity that aims to promote community-building among young ASEAN citizens was initiated by Indonesia in 2003. The event was held in conjunction with the Second ASCOE Meeting, with Indonesia fully supporting the cost of participation of student delegations (4 participants

and 2 chaperones) from participating ASEAN Member Countries. This project would be continued on rotation and cost-shared basis.

ASCOE reviewed its own mission and format in relation to the Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organisation (SEAMEO) and agreed to consider various options on the future of ASCOE at its next meeting.

University Networking

The ASEAN University Network (AUN) is presently coordinating the implementation of 18 activities both within ASEAN and between ASEAN and its Dialogue Partners. The AUN's ASEAN Studies Programme aims to enhance regional awareness by establishing postgraduate ASEAN Studies Programme in course curricula of AUN Member Universities. Six core course syllabi have been developed with funding support from the ASEAN Foundation. The syllabi can be downloaded from <http://aunvirtualu.disu.edu.ph>. The AUN's M.A. in ASEAN Studies Programme will be hosted by the Universiti Malaya starting in 2005.

Student and faculty exchanges have been carried out through two regular cost-shared AUN activities, the AUN Educational Forum and the AUN Distinguished Scholars Programme (previously known as AUN Distinguished Professors Programme). The 6th AUN Educational Forum is scheduled to be held in Myanmar from 20 June to 4 July 2004 under the theme "ASEAN in the Knowledge Age: Building Learning Societies." The 3rd AUN Distinguished Scholars Programme is under consideration by the ASEAN Foundation for funding support.

In addition to these, AUN's Student Exchange Programme continued to offer scholarships to undergraduate students from AUN/ASEAN Universities each year. For the academic year 2003, Universiti Malaya, National University of Singapore, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Universiti Sains Malaysia, and De La Salle University offered

55_HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

scholarships and financial assistance to students from AUN Member Universities. Similarly, Burapha University and Chulalongkorn University offered scholarships for students from CLMV countries while University of the Philippines offered scholarships for ASEAN students.

Under the AUN Collaborative Research, two pilot research projects with financial support from the ASEAN Foundation have been recently completed. These pilot projects followed two themes: "Software and Information Technology Training in Five ASEAN Member Countries" conducted by Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam (coordinated by De La Salle University of the Philippines) and "Development and Performance of Mutual Funds in Five ASEAN Member Countries" conducted by the AUN Graduate Business and Economics Programme (AGBEP) Network Secretariat of Gadjah Mada University in Indonesia).

Other major AUN activities include AUN-Quality Assurance (QA) which aims to promote the development of a quality assurance system as an instrument for maintaining, improving and enhancing teaching, research and the overall institutional academic standards for higher education of AUN Member Universities. This single collective ASEAN effort in QA in higher education has achieved much progress with the establishment of AUN-QA common policies and criteria, benchmarking procedures, the sharing of good practices, and the development of assessment instruments. The AUN-QA Guidelines is being developed as a record of AUN-QA efforts and a manual of AUN-QA practices.

In order to promote ASEAN culture and foster regional solidarity and identity in line with the ASEAN Vision 2020 and in accordance with the AUN objectives, the AUN has embarked on the ASEAN Youth Cultural Forum initiative where ASEAN youths could share their ideas and experiences through lectures, workshops, and cultural performances.

The AUN continues to implement student and faculty exchange activities with institutes of higher learning in ASEAN Dialogue Partner countries such as China, the EU, India, Japan and the ROK.

7. CULTURE AND INFORMATION

The ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information (COCI) continued to implement its mandate to enhance ASEAN awareness towards promoting regional identity and solidarity among the peoples of Southeast Asia. In the period under review, two projects on promoting ASEAN, two cultural immersion programmes, a documentary and a skills/knowledge-enhancing training programme have been approved for implementation. Four continuing projects on awareness building have been implemented.

Promotion of ASEAN and ASEAN Awareness

Public awareness and understanding of ASEAN's work have been promoted through such projects as the ASEAN Quiz, the ASEAN in Action radio programme and the ASEAN TV News project. The latter is being further broadcast by Asiavision (News Exchange under the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union) and the EBU (European Broadcasting Union). These efforts were geared towards developing an awareness of regional identity, creating a strong ASEAN community as well as projecting ASEAN outside the region.

Due to favourable response, the ASEAN Information Seminar Series project was implemented for the third year. Organised in collaboration with ASEAN

The ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information (COCI) continued to implement its mandate to enhance ASEAN awareness towards promoting regional identity and solidarity among the peoples of Southeast Asia.

56_HUMAN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

experts from the academia and relevant government agencies, the seminars focus on current topics facing the region and have been held in each of the ten Member Countries.

The ASEAN Journalists Visit Programme is designed to facilitate better understanding among ASEAN's senior media editors on the policies of ASEAN Member Countries and to enhance cooperation and exchanges among the media organisations.

The ASEAN Photo Competition and Exhibition aims to attain a heightened sense of awareness and understanding of ASEAN among the participants and viewing public. This year's theme will be on "Growing with Nature - ASEAN's Environmental Challenges." In addition, a documentary video has been commissioned on ASEAN Puppetry Traditions to share aspects of ASEAN's rich and diverse culture heritage.

Cross-cultural Activities

The COCI helped celebrate the commemoration of ASEAN-Japan's 35th anniversary celebrations and also the "ASEAN-Japan Year of Exchange 2003" with a variety of events held in Japan. ASEAN Member Countries, through their national COCI, also contributed to the commemoration of these twin events with the staging of various activities from January to December 2003.

An ASEAN Photo Exhibition on cultural heritage sites and museums, the ASEAN Contemporary Arts Exhibition, and the acclaimed Realizing Rama dance production were shown in Japan. Realizing Rama previously toured 17 cities in Europe and parts of Asia. A performance of the ASEAN-Japan Symphony Orchestra was also staged in Tokyo in December 2003. Moreover, Japan took part in several cultural immersion projects, namely, the ASEAN Youth Camp held in Laos and the People-to-People Exchange Programme held Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore.

As part of the implementation of the ASEAN Declaration of Cultural Heritage, adopted in 2000,

several activities were carried out in 2003 to enhance the region's capabilities in protecting, preserving, managing and promoting ASEAN cultural heritage sites. With technical assistance from Australia's AusHeritage, Member Countries participated in the Training Course on Pest Control Management and Treatment of Cultural Heritage and the Workshop on Developing an ASEAN Model for Cultural Heritage Mapping.

Future Focus

The ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Information (AMRI) have remained focused on four major concerns, namely, (a) Projecting the Unity, Stability and Dynamism of ASEAN in the Global Communications Era; (b) Continue projecting the correct image of ASEAN; (c) Proactive actions in response to terrorism, transnational diseases; and (d) Improving the quality of ASEAN Television News in projecting images of ASEAN.

Meanwhile, the ASEAN Ministers Responsible for Culture and Arts (AMCA), which convened its Inaugural Meeting in October 2003 and is now the highest policy-making body under the ASEAN cooperation framework on culture and the arts, spelled out several priority areas of cooperation, including Human Resources Development (HRD) in the Cultural Context and the Development of Small and Medium-size Cultural Enterprise and Industry (SMCE). These new issues are expected to further intensify regional cooperation in the field of culture and arts.

The ASEAN Declaration of Concord II (Bali Concord II) of October 2003 mandated that ASEAN "shall nurture talent and promote interaction among ASEAN scholars, writers, artists and media practitioners to help preserve and promote ASEAN's diverse cultural heritage while fostering regional identity as well as cultivating people's awareness of ASEAN". The promotion of regional identity is now a major theme of ASEAN activities and it is envisaged that the promotion and deepening of regional cooperation in culture and the arts would play a pivotal role in achieving this goal.



