

TOWARDS A SOUTHEAST ASIAN COMMUNITY

A HUMAN AGENDA

We, the undersigned citizens of Southeast Asia, convened a meeting in Manila, Republic of the Philippines, on 22-23 August 1996, to reappraise the ideas and recommendations concerning the region's future, as articulated in our work on "Southeast Asia Beyond the Year 2000: A Statement of Vision", done in the same city on 30-31 May 1994, in the light of developments that have taken place since then. Drawing inspiration from our discussions with President Fidel V. Ramos, Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, Anwar Ibrahim, and high-ranking members of the Philippine Government, we hereby adopt and advocate the following for promoting collective progress of the nation-states and the peoples of the region.

THE VISION

Moved by the ideals espoused by the founding fathers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and expressed in the Bangkok Declaration of 1967, we reaffirm our conviction that Southeast Asia should be a community and that collectively this community should be a major political, economic, cultural and moral entity on the world stage in the twenty-first century.

We continue to believe that this community should be a pluralistic community of equal and sovereign states, bound together by a sense of common destiny and shared values, enjoying peace and prosperity which render it a model of international cooperation and a key building block towards the creation of a global community.

We remain firmly committed to the broad principles of community-building, as articulated in the "Statement of Vision." One is national and regional resilience, which means the need to develop and rely upon individual and collective capacity to mobilize the full potentials of our human and natural resources, while seeking ways and means of minimizing our shortcomings and limitations. The second is unity in diversity, which means a recognition not only of the differences that divide us, but also of the need and capacity for reconciling and transcending those differences through processes of building trust and consensus. The third is common national interests, which means a recognition that, while there are certain opportunities and challenges which are of direct, and sometimes critical, concern to individual states, these can be best taken advantage of and coped with through collective efforts. And the fourth is open regionalism, which means a recognition of the need to be outward-looking, to look beyond Southeast Asia, and to continue to strengthen ties with the outside world.

Furthermore, we reaffirm our commitment to ASEAN norms and processes, enshrined in the ASEAN Concord and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia.

While reaffirming our past beliefs and commitments, we also acknowledge that in the two-year interval since 1994 many developments have taken place. The process of community-building has moved forward apace, bringing nearer to fulfillment many of the ideas and recommendations advocated in the "Statement of Vision." Notable progress has been the enlargement of ASEAN membership, the holding of a Southeast Asian summit, the acceleration of the AFTA-CEPT process, the provision for phased integration of less advanced economies into these systems, and the enhancement of the region's role in various international fora. One Southeast Asia may not be a fact as yet, but the ever-increasing range and depth of regional cooperation have brought it nearer to reality.

Inspired by these developments and by the ASEAN governments' commitment to community-building as articulated in the Bangkok Summit Declaration of December 1995, we believe that it is time to refine our vision and to raise new and vigorous agenda which will be relevant to and necessary for both community-building and the enhancement of the quality of national and regional life in Southeast Asia in the twenty-first century.

THE VISION REFINED

We see community-building as a continuous process, an ongoing journey which moves the whole region toward common travails and has as its final destination peace, prosperity, and the unity of diverse cultures and distinct peoples existing therein.

We believe that communities are about peoples and that community-building is a process of creating a state of mind. The tie that truly binds is not faceless institutions and agencies, impersonal agreements and procedures, but a commitment, a sense of caring and sharing, a sense of participation and ownership, a sense of belonging and attachment, in other words a sense of community, which can only be nurtured in the spirit of real, live human beings.

Furthermore, we believe that a true community should embody the moral dimension of human endeavor, whose strength is based upon enlightened self-interest and synergy among different, even divisive and conflicting, elements of that community. This moral dimension should provide a reference for the development and evolution of mechanisms and institutions which give concrete expression to that community and help further to strengthen it.

Therefore, we believe that the quality of the community-building process in Southeast Asia is dependent, not only upon the range and depth of cooperative endeavors among the region's states and governments, but also upon the moral purpose directing and sustaining this process. This moral purpose must be a unifying force, transcending geographical barriers, cultural diversity, economic disparities, and political and ideological differences. It must prevail over the asymmetries of the region—between the strong and the weak, the large and the small, the rich and the poor, the privileged and the disadvantaged. It must celebrate a quintessential goal which members of the community can identify with, call their own, and seek to fulfill. Over time, it must provide, and must be seen to provide, the greatest possible benefits to the greatest possible number of peoples.

We believe that, to build a Southeast Asian community, there must be both a sense of community and a moral purpose, and that, to provide the region's community-building process with the necessary sense of community and the necessary moral purpose, the human dimension should be the main focus of all regional governments' collective and individual efforts to promote well-being and progress.

In the past, advocates of Southeast Asian regionalism have generally put emphasis upon the nation-state as the point of reference and on the achievement of its security as the measure of progress. We believe that it was with good reason. For during the first decades of the post-colonial era, the regional states were faced with numerous security threats emanating from a variety of sources.

Now, at the threshold of the twenty-first century, the achievement of national and regional resilience is such that the survival of Southeast Asian nation-states is no longer a salient issue. Nor can there be any doubt about their capacity to engage in cooperative endeavors, which ultimately serve to enhance further their individual and collective security.

Thus, while the nation-states continue to be crucial frameworks and mechanisms for providing physical and psychological security and well-being, the process of community-building requires a shift of focus to the people, from appraising progress solely in terms of the survival and stability of the nation-state, to measuring it more in terms of the human predicament.

We believe that "a human agenda" should be elevated to the top in the regional governments' individual and collective priorities and that successful implementation

of “a human agenda” should be considered the pinnacle of achievement on the road to building a Southeast Asian community in the twenty-first century.

A HUMAN AGENDA

We, the undersigned citizens of Southeast Asia, in tribute to our nation-states who opened the gates to self-determination and economic prosperity, do hereby advocate the following “human agenda” as a means of enhancing both the pace and the depth of the community-building processes in Southeast Asia, so that the quality of human, national and regional life can continue to be uplifted, so that the region’s nation-states and governments can be raised to higher planes of political, economic, social, cultural and moral development, so that the full potential of the region’s peoples can be nurtured and utilized to the limit of their possible achievement, self-esteem, self-respect, and self-livelihood, as we move into the next century.

The first of these agenda is peace at all levels, international, regional and domestic. Peace for the people is not only the absence of war, but also involves the presence of positive conditions, supportive of security of life and property at all levels and conducive to mutually beneficial exchanges among nation-states and peoples.

The second is physical and material well-being. This in turn requires the promotion of open-market mechanisms as instruments of efficiency and distribution, without state intervention except where it is necessary to ensure fair play and to protect those who cannot protect themselves. It requires freedom of movement of goods and services, capital and labor, information and technology, across the political boundaries within the region and between the region and the outside world. And lastly, it also requires massive investment in human resources development as a source of longer-term growth and prosperity.

The third is the need to safeguard and to enhance the dignity of the human person by the rule of law, traditional values, and provision of opportunities for education and employment. People empowerment is the key, and every effort should be made to promote the individual’s capacity to participate in the various political, social and economic processes taking place in the community and society.

The fourth is the need to protect the family institution as the most immediate source of security for the old and the young and as a purveyor of knowledge and traditional values to new generations. Protection should also be afforded women, and their capacity for full participation in their society’s political, social and economic life, encouraged.

The fifth is the need for strengthening the spirit of local community and instilling a deeper sense of civic consciousness, so that freedom and responsibility, individual rights and communitarian obligations go hand in hand.

The sixth is the need for more just, equal, tolerant and caring societies, where the poor, the underprivileged, the disadvantaged and the diverse cultural groups can receive protection and assistance, where their basic requirements of food, shelter, clothing, healthcare and education are met, and where there is respect for political rights and accountability of governance.

The seventh is the necessity for enhancing the human face of development, to promote greater social equity, to reduce and eliminate social and economic disparities that arise from the processes of development, and to provide opportunities for the advancement of all.

The eighth is the imperative for creating harmony between man and nature. This requires the implementation of ecologically sustainable development strategies, cooperation at the regional and global levels, and respect for the environment on the part of individuals and local communities.

The ninth is the imperative for generating "cultural synergy." Given Southeast Asia's diversity, it is necessary to respect differences in culture. More importantly, we must preserve, nurture and draw strength from the region's richness of cultures and cultural heritage, forging a dynamic force for progress.

And the tenth is the need for an open mind. To anticipate the flux and changes in the twenty-first century, the societies of Southeast Asia should be more open to one another and to the outside world. But open regionalism, as widely advocated, will not be sufficient. More importantly, Southeast Asians should open themselves up to one another as fellow members of an extended family. They should actively participate in the process of community building to forge that sense of belonging to the community, which is the source of their security and well-being.

FLAGSHIP PROJECTS

To help realize this "human agenda," a number of "flagship" projects and measures should be adopted.

Among them are:

- * Establishment of a Southeast Asian Development Corps which will offer



SISOWATH SIRIRATH



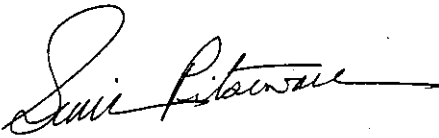
SHAHARIL TALIB



JUSUF WANANDI



LAU TEIK SOON



SURIN PITSUWAN



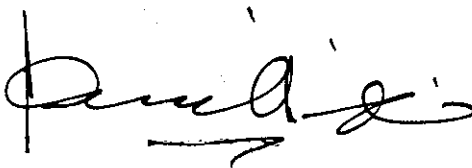
NOORDIN SOPIEE



MOHAMED JAWHAR HASSAN



KWA CHONG GUAN



TAN SIR DATUK ZAINAL ABIDIN SULONG

SIGNATORIES

JOSE T. ALMONTE

*Presidential Security Adviser and Director-General, National Security Council,
Philippines*

ZAKARIA AHMAD

Professor and Head, Strategic Studies Unit, National University of Malaysia

PHAM VAN CHUONG

*Vice-Chairman, Commission for External Affairs
of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam*

KAVI CHONGKITTAVORN

Executive Editor, The Nation, Bangkok, Thailand

JESUS ESTANISLAO

President, University of Asia and the Pacific, Manila, Philippines

KAMARUDIN JAFFAR

Chairman, Institute For Policy Research, Malaysia

CAROLINA G. HERNANDEZ

*President, Institute for Strategic and Development Studies, University of the Philip-
pines*

DORODJATUN KUNTJORO-JAKTI

Dean, Faculty of Economics, University of Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia

MOHAMED JAWHAR HASSAN

*Deputy Director-General, Institute of Strategic and International Studies, Kuala
Lumpur, Malaysia*

NGUYEN VAN LONG

*Deputy Director, Department for Southeast and South Asia, Commission for
External Affairs of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam*

M.R. SUKHUMBHAND PARIBATRA

Chairman, Chumphot Panthip Foundation, Bangkok, Thailand

PHANTHONG PHOMAHAXAY

Ambassador of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to Australia

ROBERTO R. ROMULO

Chairman, APEC Business Advisory Council, Manila, Philippines

M. RAJARETNAM

Director, Information and Resource Center, Singapore

SABAM SIAGIAN

Board Member, The Jakarta Post Publishing Company, Indonesia

SISOWATH SIRIRATH

*Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, and Permanent Representative,
Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the United Nations*

SHAHARIL TALIB

*Professor and Chairman, Department of Southeast Asian Studies, University of
Malaya*

JUSUF WANANDI

*Chairman of the Board, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta,
Indonesia*

LAU TEIK SOON

Chairman, Singapore Institute of International Affairs

SURIN PITSUWAN

Member of Parliament, Thailand

NOORDIN SOPIEE

*Director-General, Institute of Strategic and International Studies, Kuala Lumpur,
Malaysia*

ZAINAL ABIDIN SULONG

*Chairman, Institute of Strategic and International Studies, Kuala Lumpur,
Malaysia*

KWA CHONG GUAN

Chairman, Singapore Philatelic Museum

APPENDIX

The following, "Southeast Asia Beyond The Year 2000: A Statement of Vision" was the first vision statement issued by the "Citizens of Southeast Asia". Issued on 31 May 1994, it was submitted to all the Heads of Governments of the 10 Southeast Asian countries. It is reproduced here for the benefit of readers.

SOUTHEAST ASIA BEYOND THE YEAR 2000

A STATEMENT OF VISION

We, the undersigned citizens of Southeast Asia, meeting in Manila, Republic of the Philippines, on 30-31 May, 1994, do hereby adopt and advocate the following vision for our region.

THE VISION

We believe that Southeast Asia should be a community. Collectively, this community should be a major political, economic, cultural, and moral entity on the world stage in the twenty-first century.

Geography has consigned us to living in close proximity with each other, and geography has made it incumbent upon us to meet, live, and work together as good neighbors. Throughout our common history, trade and cultural exchanges have characterized our relations with one another. However, we have oftentimes failed the tests of good neighborliness. Conflicts and wars have arisen, and geographical proximity meant that in such conflicts and wars each of us ultimately lost something in the process.

Geography has given us a shared destiny, and the fact of this shared destiny, we believe, means that we must strive to build a Southeast Asian community.

This community should be a **pluralistic community**.

It should be a community of **equal and sovereign states**, each with its own identity, preferred interests, valued relationships, and conceptions of development and progress, but also with a **sense of common destiny**, shared perceptions of its own future, and common commitments to the enhancement of regional peace and prosperity, fundamental human values, and the basic principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Furthermore, this Southeast Asian community should also be a **community of peace and prosperity**. The states and peoples of Southeast Asia should strive to create structures of relationships and of shared values, which enable them to live in peace with one another and with the rest of the world, to engage in mutually rewarding cooperation among themselves and with others, and to develop the

potentials of their own human and natural resources to the fullest extent, so that prosperity can be shared by all.

This Southeast Asian community of peace and prosperity that we envision should be a **model of international cooperation** for the rest of the global community.

Lastly, we believe that, by virtue of being a model of international cooperation and by enhancing the region's strengths through collective endeavors and synergy, this Southeast Asian community should also strive to be a **building block** towards a global community. In this way it becomes a **central actor** on the global political and economic stage.

In the past, military might determined the destiny of nations. Increasingly and into the future, international influence is and will be founded upon other factors, most notably, economic and technological dynamism, qualities of national resilience and moral leadership, and demonstrations of the ability to achieve peace and security through amity and consensus-building.

We firmly believe that the time has come to articulate and pursue this vision of Southeast Asia. For the rapid and far-reaching changes which have been taking place since the end of the Cold War offer us a unique opportunity to shape our own destiny as the twenty-first century approaches.

To realize this vision of Southeast Asia, there are a number of **principles** which we believe to be imperative.

The first principle is **national and regional resilience**. By this we mean the need to develop and rely upon individual and collective capacity to mobilize the full potentials of our human and natural resources, while seeking ways and means of minimizing our shortcomings and limitations.

The second is **unity in diversity**. This means a recognition not only of the differences that divide us, but also of the need and capacity for reconciling and transcending those differences through processes of building trust and consensus.

The third is the principle of **common national interests**. This means a recognition that, while there are certain opportunities and challenges which are of direct, and sometimes critical, concern to individual states, these can be best taken advantage of and coped with through collective efforts. These opportunities include trade, investment, and human and natural resource development, and the challenges consist of such problems as the environment, narcotics, illegal movements of people, piracy and the spread of diseases.

The fourth is **open regionalism**. This means a recognition that, while we wish to build a stronger and more cohesive community, there is also the need to be outward-looking, to look beyond Southeast Asia, and to continue to strengthen political, economic, and cultural ties, be they bilateral or multilateral, with countries outside the region.

STRATEGY FOR COMMUNITY-BUILDING

To become such a community, Southeast Asia must adopt a **multi-dimensional strategy**.

In the **political and security dimension**, we should:

- strengthen the network of bilateral relations among Southeast Asian states;
- strengthen and expand ASEAN membership to include all regional states;
- extend accession to the 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation to all regional states;
- encourage all Southeast Asian states to participate in ASEAN-sponsored or-initiated fora, including the ASEAN Regional Forum, as mechanisms for region-wide dialogues in political security matters; and
- convene regular consultations among all Southeast Asian leaders, to strengthen the habit of cooperation and to set the direction and pace of community-building.

In the **economic and technological dimension**, we should:

- accelerate the full implementation of the AFTA and CEPT agreements by the year 2000;
- prepare and initiate the phased integration of other Southeast Asian states into AFTA and CEPT;
- promote collaboration in research, development, and distribution of alternative energy resources, as well as the management of other natural resources of regional value;
- set up regional mechanisms to study and recommend ways of stimulating intra-

regional investments, development of technology and human resources, as well as transitional flows of information and knowledge; and

- extend the ASEAN Business Forum to other Southeast Asian states.

In the **social and cultural dimension**, we should:

- take immediate steps to facilitate and expand people-to-people contacts and exchanges;
- harmonize immigration laws and procedures;
- upgrade intra-regional communication and telecommunication systems;
- expand exchange programs for students and civil servants;
- establish Southeast Asian press and information networks;
- promote Southeast Asian studies and languages in educational institutions;
- establish a Southeast Asian university system;
- establish a Southeast Asian Cultural Center in each of the Southeast Asian countries; and
- set up a Southeast Asian disaster relief mechanism.

FLAGSHIPS

To achieve this vision, a number of “flagship” projects and measures must be adopted immediately.

Among them are:

A Southeast Asian Summit

There should be a Southeast Asian Summit, which can be an informal meeting, to give impetus to the building of a Southeast Asian community. This should take place as soon as possible.

A Southeast Asian Initiative on Cambodia

There should be a dual-track regional initiative on Cambodia. The first track consists of political and diplomatic initiatives directly to revitalize and consolidate the peace process. The second involves mobilization of funds for social and economic reconstruction, which will serve to underpin the efficacy of the political and diplomatic moves. Such mobilization can include the issuance of bonds, officially endorsed by Southeast Asian governments, or the establishment of a bank for the reconstruction of Cambodia.

A Southeast Asian Initiative on the South China Sea

Southeast Asian leaders should endorse the ASEAN initiative on the South China Sea and immediately undertake concrete projects of cooperation for confidence-building among the states concerned.

Management of Transboundary Problems

A series of meetings at ministerial and senior official levels should be urgently convened to develop mechanisms for resolving the various transboundary problems, including illegal movements of people, narcotics, smuggling, piracy, the spread of contagious diseases, natural resources management and environmental conservation.

Economic and Technical Cooperation

A series of meetings at ministerial and senior official levels should be urgently convened to increase and expand economic and technical cooperation among all Southeast Asian countries. The main emphasis in the initial stages should be on trade, investment and human resources development.

A Southeast Asian Initiative on Alternative Renewable Energy Sources

Southeast Asia should immediately undertake the development of alternative renewable energy resources, such as rip-tide deuterium, to be shared by the region.

Southeast Asian Support for the Mekong River Projects

Southeast Asia should immediately demonstrate its commitment to support projects aimed at harnessing and equitably utilizing the resources of the Mekong River and its tributaries. This commitment will serve to promote and underline the sense of regional identity, as well as to encourage a development which is likely to benefit the region as a whole.

A Southeast Asian Development Corps

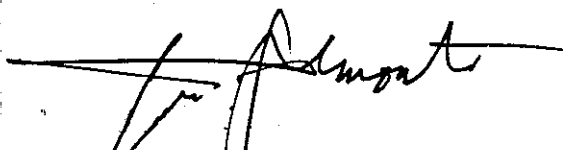
Southeast Asia should immediately establish a "Southeast Asian Development Corps." This will offer opportunities, especially for the young, to learn about other countries' problems and their solutions at first hand, and foster a sense of regional identity.

ASEAN Support for One Southeast Asia

At the 1995 ASEAN Summit in Bangkok, the ASEAN leaders should collectively support this vision of a Southeast Asian Community.

We, the undersigned citizens of Southeast Asia, invite all peoples and nations of our region to share in this vision and collectively work towards the realization of a peaceful and prosperous Southeast Asia.

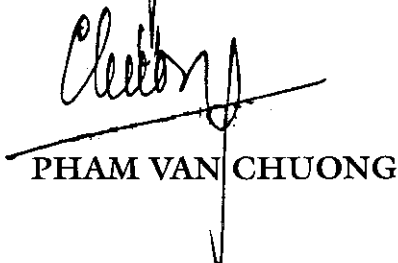
Done in Manila, Republic of the Philippines, on 31 May 1994.



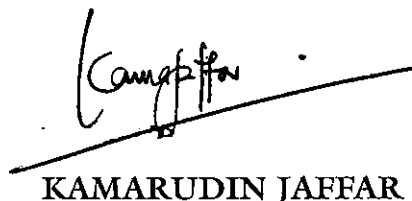
JOSE T. ALMONTE



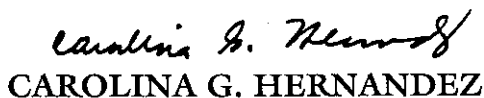
MOHAMED JAWHAR HASSAN



PHAM VAN CHUONG



KAMARUDIN JAFFAR



CAROLINA G. HERNANDEZ



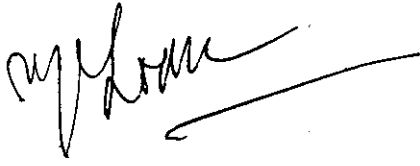
DORODJATUN KUNTJORO-JAKTI



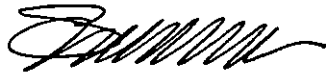
LAU TEIK SOON



SABAM SIAGIAN



NGUYEN VIET LOAN



SISOWATH SIRIRATH



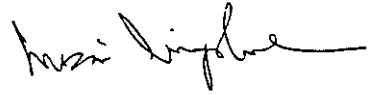
SUKHUMBHAND PARIBATRA



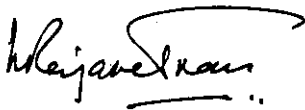
SURIN PITSUWAN



PHANTHONG PHOMMAHAXAY



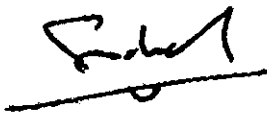
SARASIN VIRAPHOL




M. RAJARETNAM



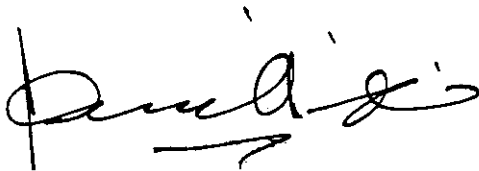
JUSUF WANANDI



SHAHARIL TALIB



U WIN-PE



TAN SRI ZAINAL ABIDIN SULONG