

# SHARED DESTINY

SOUTHEAST ASIA IN THE 21st CENTURY

REPORT  
OF  
THE ASEAN-VIETNAM STUDY GROUP

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FEBRUARY 1993

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## PREFACE

The Asean-Vietnam Study Group was set up in early 1992 as an extension of a project called the International Symposium on "Interaction For Progress".

The "Interaction For Progress" International Symposium project was initiated in early 1991 with the broad aim of contributing to the overcoming of past antagonisms and to the definition of a new partnership between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, and Vietnam. Bringing together decision-makers and experts from both the public sector and the private sector in ASEAN and Vietnam, the project intended to expand and deepen the processes of confidence-building and of promoting mutual understanding, and to contribute to the learning process for Vietnamese decision-makers and experts in various fields about ASEAN'S experiences and cooperative frameworks, and for ASEAN officials and experts about Vietnam's reform and development agenda.

Since the inception of the project two symposia have been organised. The first one, "Interaction For Progress: Vietnam's New Course and ASEAN Experiences" was held in August 1991 in Hanoi. The second symposium, "Interaction For Progress: Vietnam's Modernisation and ASEAN Cooperation" was held in May 1992 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Summary reports of these two meetings have been issued.

Following the successful conclusion of the 1991 Hanoi meeting, an ASEAN-Vietnam Study Group was set up under the patronage of His Excellency Anwar Ibrahim, Minister of Finance of Malaysia. The Study Group is conceived as an informal body that would identify policy options and make recommendations to

the concerned authorities in order to speed up regional cooperation.

For almost ten months between 1992 and early 1993, the Study Group, which comprised experts from ASEAN and Vietnam, worked in accordance with given guidelines to identify the important issues at stake in ASEAN-Vietnam relations, to explore the grounds for harmonisation of interests between ASEAN and Vietnam, and to formulate policy recommendations for cooperative linkages.

The task of the study group was also to elaborate on the broader issue of whether the multidimensional interactions between ASEAN and Vietnam and their implications could become catalysts for the development of "One Southeast Asia", that is a region evolving in the direction of an expanding political and economic community.

The initiative for the organisation of both the "Interaction For Progress" International Symposia and the ASEAN-Vietnam Study Group came from the Information and Resource Center, a private, non-governmental organisation based in Singapore. As the project evolved, a number of other regional institutions and leaders in ASEAN and Vietnam lent their support.

The ASEAN-Vietnam Study Group is composed of an advisory committee of 11 persons and a Task Force of 17 members from ASEAN and Vietnam, under the Chairmanship of M.R. Sukhumbhand Paribatra of Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. The group comprising experts and officials, is set up as an informal body. The list of study group members is provided below.

From their inception, these two interrelated projects received the strong endorsement of His Excellency Anwar Ibrahim. They also

were supported by a number of other regional leaders: His Excellency Phan Van Khai, Deputy Prime Minister of Vietnam, who was primarily responsible in 1991 for ensuring the success of the Hanoi Symposium, His Excellency Nguyen Khanh, Deputy Prime Minister of Vietnam, who addressed the Second International Symposium on "Interaction For Progress" held in Kuala Lumpur and who generously paid close attention to the work of the Study Group in the last few months; Mr. Ramon Mitra, the Speaker of the Philippine House of Representatives, who attended the first symposium; His Excellency General Chatichai Choonhavan, former Prime Minister of Thailand, who gave an address at the Kuala Lumpur Symposium: His Excellency Chuan Leekpai, Prime Minister of Thailand, who opened the International Forum on "Towards One Southeast Asia in the Twenty-First Century", in Bangkok, on 22 February 1993, that launched the ASEAN-Vietnam Study Group Report; and His Excellency Nguyen Dy Nien, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam, His Excellency General Jose Almonte, Chairman, National Security Council of the Philippines, and His Excellency Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, Deputy Foreign Minister of Thailand, who all addressed the Forum at the launching of this Report in Bangkok on 22 February 1993.

This Report on "Shared Destiny: Southeast Asia in the Twenty-First Century" is envisaged to be the first among a series of reports promoting the realisation of the concept of "One Southeast Asia".

This entire project has been supported and sponsored by the Management For Change Project of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and a number of private sector organisations in Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand.