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MYANMAR IN ASEAN

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MYANMAR IN ASEAN

REGIONAL COOPERATION EXPERIENCE

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*This book is dedicated to my mother and
all of those who taught me aspects of life.*

*The country casts a kind of spell over its friends
which they cannot break if they would.*

John F. Cady

A History of Modern Burma (1958)

This is Burma, and it will be quite unlike any land you know about.

Rudyard Kipling

Letters from the East (1898)

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Preface

The objective of this book is to help tertiary students of economics, history, international studies and economic geography in Myanmar to widen their knowledge of ASEAN and its integration process in general and ASEAN-Myanmar cooperation and Myanmar's accession to ASEAN in particular. Textbooks and reference books in English for university students in Myanmar in all academic disciplines have become rare as a result of the country's isolation since 1962, when the military took over.

Soon after the military takeover, nationalization was introduced in economic and service sectors such as foreign trade, domestic wholesale trade, foreign and domestic banks, industries, fisheries, and mining, under the "Burmese Way to Socialism". Even private hospitals and schools were nationalized as required by the new self-reliance policy.

Consequently, in 1964, the medium of instruction in all academic institutions of primary, secondary and tertiary levels was changed — from English to Burmese. University staff were asked to prepare textbooks in Burmese; many of them were translated from old English textbooks. A number of compulsory textbooks in Burmese were published in the late 1960s and early 1970s but most of these have never been updated.

Then in 1981, English was reintroduced as a medium of instruction at schools and universities but at a very slow pace. The English language was again taught at primary schools despite many obstacles such as the lack of qualified teachers and teaching aids.

After a military coup in 1988, the ruling State Law and Order Council (SLORC) opened up the economy. Part and parcel of the economic reforms included liberalization of foreign and domestic trade, introduction of foreign and domestic investment laws, and private sector development. Thus English has once again become an important medium of communication and is being revived at the universities. The private sector has also been active in opening up English language schools, business schools and computer schools.

Moreover, SLORC (which changed its name to the State Peace and Development Council [SPDC] in 1997), unlike previous military regimes, has a proactive foreign

policy by involvement in international forums, including securing ASEAN membership. Thus interest in the English language has also rapidly grown in the country as the role of English as a language of learning, business, technology, international relations and diplomacy is being recognized.

However, there remains the enormous problem of a lack of textbooks and reference books in English at all levels of education, particularly academic books on subjects related to Myanmar compiled by native scholars. Moreover, due to a lack of foreign earnings, school libraries have been unable to buy textbooks and reference books in foreign languages.

Furthermore, as Myanmar joined ASEAN in 1997, the author feels that students of economics, history and international relations and businessmen should understand the impact and implications of Myanmar joining ASEAN. While there are several articles and book chapters by Myanmar citizens (locals as well as expatriates), these are either not in a book form or not in English.

Hence, it is obvious that there is an urgent need to fill the vacuum created by the lack of reference material in English, particularly on Myanmar's accession to ASEAN, for students, businessmen, scholars and others interested in the subject. The author hopes that this book will help fill the gap in a small way.

This book begins with the formation of ASEAN, its evolution and its integration process. Before it continues to explain and analyse the impact of Myanmar's accession to ASEAN, a brief overview of the country's political and economic development is also presented.

However, there are limitations to this study. There are a plethora of studies on ASEAN in its more than 35 years of existence and the author could not include all aspects of the regional association's operations. As an economist, the author might be biased in his presentation of ASEAN's evolution and the associated issues and challenges as well as his analysis of Myanmar's development, and the impact and implications of its accession. However, he also tries to assess ASEAN and its relations with Myanmar from political and security perspectives.

The author would be delighted, despite these limitations, if readers find this work useful.

Mya Than

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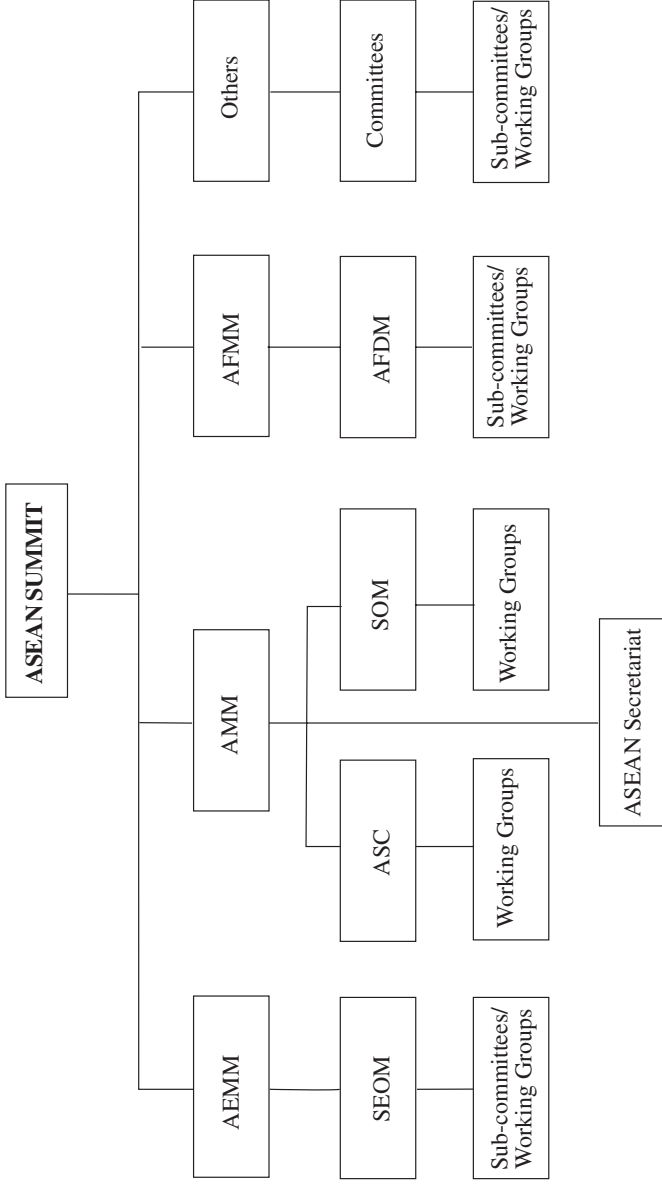
Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AEGDM	ASEAN Expert Group on Disaster Management
AEM	ASEAN Economic Ministers
AEMM	ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting
AFDM	ASEAN Finance and Central Bank Deputies Meeting
AFMM	ASEAN Finance Ministers Meeting
AFPFL	Anti-Fascist People's Freedom Party
AFTA	ASEAN Free Trade Area
AIA	ASEAN Investment Area
AIC	ASEAN Industrial Complementation
AICO	ASEAN Industrial Cooperation
AIDC	Asian Industrial Development Council
AIEDP	Asian Institute for Economic Development and Planning
AIJV	ASEAN Industrial Joint Ventures
AIP	ASEAN Industrial Projects
AMBDC	ASEAN-Mekong Basin Development Cooperation
AMM	ASEAN Ministerial Meeting
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
APIAN	APEC International Assessment Network
APII	Asia Pacific Information Infrastructure
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASA	Association of Southeast Asia
ASC	ASEAN Standing Committee
ASCLA	ASEAN Subcommittee on Labour Affairs
ASCOE	ASEAN Subcommittee on Education
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEM	Asia-Europe Meeting
ASM	ASEAN Summit Meeting
ASOD	ASEAN Senior Officials on Drug Matters
ASOEN	ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment

ASEM	Asia Europe Meeting
ASPAC	Asian and Pacific Council
ASY	ASEAN Subcommittee on Youth
ATFOA	ASEAN Task Force on AIDS
BSPF	Burma Socialist Programme Party
BWS	Burmese Way to Socialism
CBMs	confidence-building measures
CEPT	Common Effective Preferential Tariff
CER	Australia and New Zealand Closer Economic Relations Trade Agreement
CMI	Chiang Mai Initiative
CMLV	Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam
COCI	(ASEAN) Committee on Culture and Information
COSD	(ASEAN) Committee on Social Development
COST	(ASEAN) Committee on Science and Technology
CSO	Central Statistical Organization
DEFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia
ECAFE	Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East
EEAU	East Asian Analytical Unit (DEFAT)
EPG	Eminent Persons Group
ESCAP	Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN)
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
FDI	foreign direct investment
FTA	free trade area
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GEL	General Exclusion List (of products under CEPT)
GSP	Generalized System of Preferences
HPA	Hanoi Plan of Action
HRD	human resource development
IAI	Initiative for ASEAN Integration
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
IL	Inclusion List (under CEPT)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISI	import-substituting industrialization
IT	information technology
MERCOSUR	Common Market of the South
MFN	most-favoured-nation

NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NBIP	non-binding investment principles
NIEs	newly industrializing economies
NLD	National League for Democracy
NTB	non-tariff barrier
NTM	non-tariff measure
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PBEC	Pacific Basin Economic Council
PECC	Pacific Economic Cooperation Council
PMC	Post-Ministerial Conference
PPP	purchasing power parity
PTA	Preferential Trading Arrangement
RTA	regional trade agreements
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SADC	South Africa Development Community
SC	Standing Committee
SEANWFZ	Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
SEE	state economic enterprises
SEOM	Senior Economic Officials Meeting
SL	Sensitive List (of products under CEPT)
SLORC	State Law and Order Restoration Council
SME	small- and medium-enterprise
SMEWG	Small and Medium Enterprise Working Group
SOE	state-owned enterprise
SOM	Senior Officials Meeting
S&T	science and technology
SPDC	State Peace and Development Council
TAC	Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (ASEAN)
TEL	Temporary Exclusion List (under CEPT)
TFP	total factor productivity
TILF	trade and investment liberalization and facilitation
TRIMs	Trade-Related Investment Measures
TRIPs	Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
TRQ	tariff-rate quotas
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USDA	Union of Myanmar Solidarity and Development Association
WTO	World Trade Organization
ZOPFAN	Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality

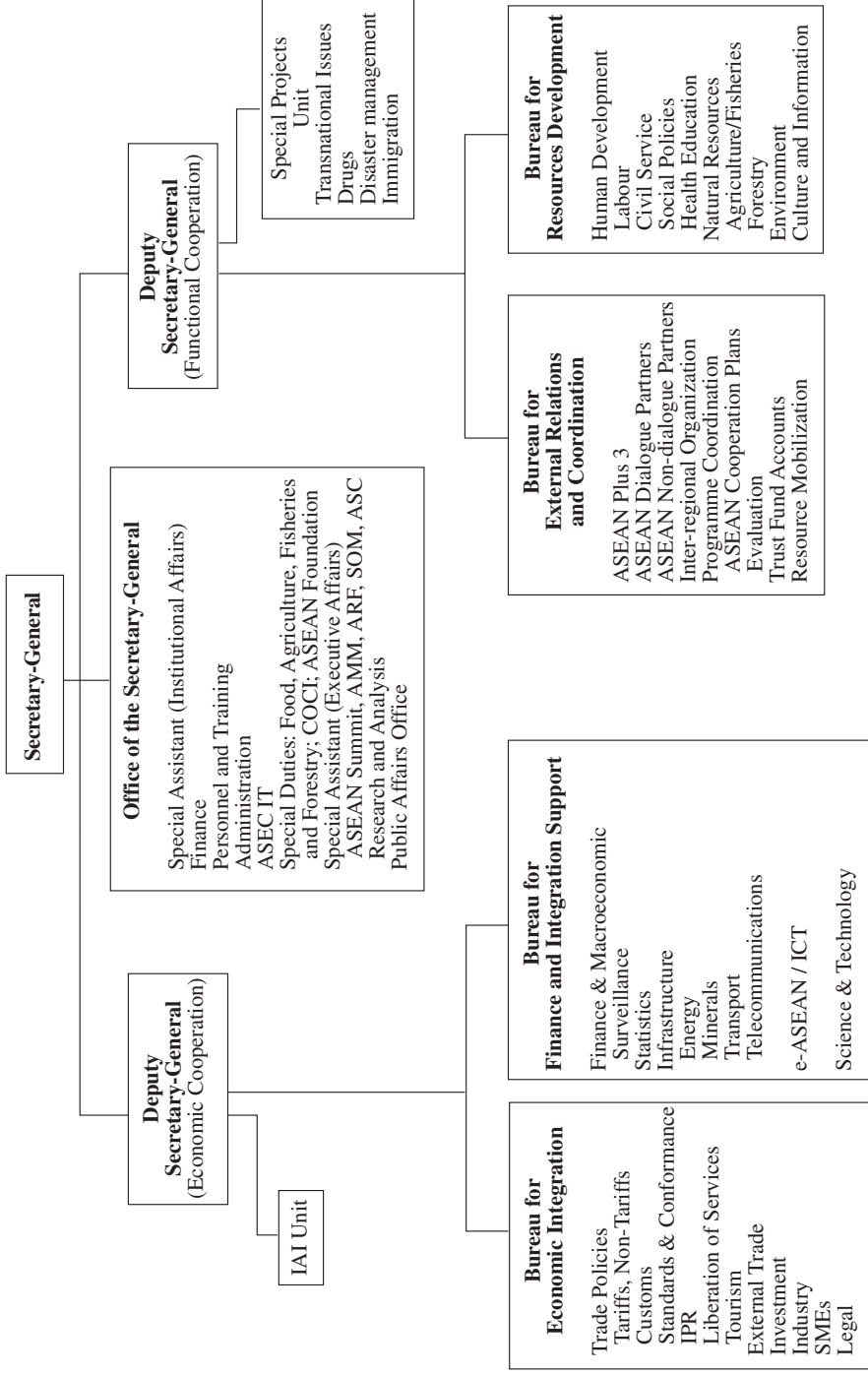
FIGURE I
ASEAN Organizational Structure



- AEMM : ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting
- AMM : ASEAN Ministerial Meeting
- AFMM : ASEAN Finance Ministers Meeting
- SEOM : Senior Economic Officials Meeting
- ASC : ASEAN Standing Committee
- SOM : Senior Officials Meeting
- AFDM : ASEAN Finance and Central Bank Deputies Meeting

Source: www.aseansec.org

FIGURE II
ASEAN Organizational Structure



Source: www.aseansec.org