



PRESS RELEASE

Southeast Asians Dedicate Development Cooperation to Regional Economic Integration

Hanoi, April 27, 2010 – Representatives of governments from all over Southeast Asia, Japan and Korea agreed that regional economic integration is an important response to the global financial and economic crisis. At the same time development effectiveness is more than ever necessary to bridge the economic and development gaps in the region.

This conclusion came from discussions of over 70 participants from 12 countries, the European Commission, the UN and the Asian Development Bank who took part in a “*Seminar on Challenges in Cooperation and Communication for Development in Southeast Asia*” on 26 and 27 April in Hanoi, Viet Nam. The seminar was hosted by the Vietnamese Ministry of Planning and Investment, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The gathering was geared towards development experts in ministries and public development agencies from Southeast Asia. Participants discussed how more effective aid can support economic integration in the ASEAN region and how development results and its benefits for poor people can be better communicated to the public. They also explored how Southeast Asian countries can contribute to the High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to be held in Seoul, Korea in 2011. In this respect, the Paris Declaration should evolve, based on the changing global and regional environment.

Mr. Vo Hong Phuc, Minister of Planning and Investment, Government of Viet Nam, said: *“To maximize aid effectiveness to serve the purpose of regional economic integration, ASEAN should have a clear strategy and policies for ODA mobilization and utilization in which the Paris Declaration’s principles of ownership, management for results and mutual accountability should be promoted. To reduce transaction cost and increase ‘value of money’, ASEAN needs to consider the possibility of rationalization of the on-going initiatives in regional economic integration.” “To reach agreement and consensus on the contribution of aid to regional economic integration and on the benefits that aid can bring to growth and poverty reduction, especially achieving the MDGs, we need to have a coherence policy from the government, parliament and the public. In this regard communication activities should be strengthened.”*

Mr. Mario Amano, Deputy Secretary-General of the OECD, stressed that Southeast Asia is a dynamic region of high importance. Therefore the OECD is regarding its activities in the region by pursuing a strategy of Enhanced Engagement. *“This means a dual-track approach, combining regional initiatives with country-specific work, in cooperation with ASEAN, APEC, the Asian Development Bank, the United Nations and other international organizations.” “We need to share best practices and understand better the role of development as a driver of global growth,”* Mr. Amano added.

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