



# THE UNITED STATES AND THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS

## *Thirty Years of Dialogue and Cooperation*

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the U.S. relationship with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Since the first ASEAN-U.S. Dialogue meeting in Manila in 1977, the United States and ASEAN have forged a close and constructive partnership that addresses issues of importance to all.



ASEAN's Environmentally Sustainable Cities Initiative, including 12 pilot projects in 5 countries.

### PLAN OF ACTION

In 2006, President Bush and ASEAN leaders identified eight

priority areas within the Plan of Action:

- Economic cooperation
- Health
- Scholarships
- Information and communications technology
- Transport
- Energy
- Disaster management
- Environmental management

The U.S. Department of State, USAID, the U.S. Trade Representative, the U.S. Department of Commerce and other partners outside the U.S. Government have developed numerous cooperation programs in these priority areas. Under the Plan of Action, these programs include well over 100 activities in the political and security, economic, educational and cultural fields.

### ECONOMIC TIES

The United States economic ties with ASEAN are robust. Two-way trade was \$168 billion last year and, collectively, ASEAN is America's fourth largest trading partner. To date, U.S. companies have invested nearly \$90 billion in ASEAN countries.

In August 2006, U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab and her ASEAN counterparts signed the U.S.-ASEAN Trade and Investment Framework Arrangement. The Arrangement established a regular and formal dialogue on trade and investment matters and a joint work plan.

### ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP

U.S.-ASEAN relations were elevated to a new level when President Bush and ASEAN leaders announced the Enhanced Partnership Joint Vision Statement in November 2005.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and ASEAN Foreign Ministers signed the Enhanced Partnership Plan of Action in July 2006. The Plan guides cooperation as ASEAN advances toward its goal of political, economic and social integration. The United States and ASEAN cooperate closely on critical transnational challenges such as terrorism, narcotics trafficking, infectious diseases, and protecting the environment.

Some highlights of the Enhanced Partnership include:

- The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is supporting capacity building on HIV/AIDS treatment, care and support, and other public health issues.
- The Fulbright Commission has launched an ASEAN Visiting Scholars Program, open to foreign affairs officials, scholars and researchers.
- The USAID Regional Development Mission supports

### SECURITY COOPERATION

The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) serves as the primary multilateral institution for regional security engagement for the U.S. in Asia. ARF provides a useful forum for discussion on security matters of importance to the Asia-Pacific region and progress on some of these issues. Through this 27-member forum, the United States has partnered with other ARF member countries to strengthen the institution, particularly in the areas of non-traditional security. Nonproliferation, disaster relief, maritime security, and civil-military coordination through multilateral exercises are some of the transnational security areas that should be reinforced as core issues for cooperation. The U.S. has funded capacity-building workshops in maritime security and nonproliferation; and has worked with the Philippines, as well as Australia and Indonesia, on a proposed 2009 ARF Disaster Relief Exercise.