

OPENING STATEMENT BY MR WILHELM HAFERKAMP  
VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES  
IN CHARGE OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE EC/ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING  
IN DUBLIN, 15-16 NOVEMBER 1984

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Mr Prime Minister,  
Ministers,

It is a privilege for me to attend the 5th session of the EEC-ASEAN Ministerial meeting. When we held the first EEC-ASEAN meeting in Brussels in 1978, nobody could have predicted that this meeting would have become a regular feature of the Community relations with ASEAN countries.

It has to be recalled that this type of meeting, at such a level and with such regularity, exists only as far as the Community is concerned, in its relations with ASEAN countries. It did not happen that way by force of circumstances or force of habit, but because there was a real need for ASEAN and the Community to discuss their relationship at the highest level.

The 1984 vintage of our regular ministerial meeting should be a particularly good one.

First we are welcoming a new partner, Brunei Darussalam, which will certainly make a fruitful contribution to the strengthening of our already well established cooperation.

Secondly, more than four years have now elapsed since the signing of our Cooperation Agreement in Kuala Lumpur in March 1980, and we are coming close to the end of its first five year period.

This period of time has been characterised for all of us, both in Europe and in ASEAN countries, by the most serious economic recession since the 1930s. Growth has gone down, unemployment has soared reaching the limits of tolerance and we have had to resist serious inflationary and protectionist pressures.

Looking at this bleak background nobody could have expected us to have been able to build up our relations as strongly as we have done.

But the results are there for all to see.

In four years our overall trade has increased by 35%, contributing to the 5 fold increase in trade between the EEC and ASEAN over the last 10 years. There has been a notable qualitative change in the structure of this trade. The share of ASEAN manufactured products has increased by 36% during this four year period, reaching 42% of overall ASEAN exports to the Community when it was only 25% in 1973. This compares very favourably with the development of Community imports from other developing countries.

This is a remarkable achievement given the circumstances, and in face of the pressures to limit trade. Even in the textile sector, where these pressures have been very serious we take 30% of ASEAN's textile and clothing exports, which is far more than any other industrialised partner.

Furthermore, we have maintained and improved our GSP scheme which is the only scheme among donor countries to include together textiles, footwear and plywood, products of key interest to ASEAN.

Very recently we have decided unilaterally to accelerate Tokyo Round tariff reductions on a range of products of interest to developing countries including ASEAN.

The Community has increased its assistance in trade promotion programmes to enable ASEAN countries to expand their export capacity. In 1983, the Community's total commitment for trade promotion activities for ASEAN and its member countries amounted to some 2.3 MECU or 29% of that year's total trade promotion budget.

In 1984, we have already exceeded this amount and this in spite of an overall budget which has not increased at all.

There are therefore in our trade relations, achievements which cannot be denied.

Let us now turn to our development cooperation. During the four years 1980-1983, following the signature of the Agreement, our total commitments for ASEAN countries amounted to 165 million ECU. This is almost a four-fold increase on the preceding four year period and represents a significantly faster rate of growth than that achieved in our development cooperation with other non-associated countries.

During the same period, we have also introduced a new budget line for the implementation of the twelve cooperation agreements concluded by the Community. ASEAN has been the major beneficiary receiving more than a third of the overall budget.

But the improvement in our cooperation cannot be measured only in figures. It has also to be viewed in terms of the enlargement of its scope. Let me give you two examples. In the science and technology field, which is so important for ASEAN countries, we have launched a cooperation programme which although essentially focussing on the training of ASEAN's scientific manpower has also laid the basis for joint projects for example those recently presented by the ASEAN Committee for Science and Technology.

We have also contributed to a better awareness in European business circles of opportunities in ASEAN. By the organisation of seminars, business conferences we have contributed to the increase of European investment in ASEAN countries. It is a slow process which cannot produce from one year to another, dramatic changes in the investment statistics. But through the

various contacts we have with European entrepreneurs we know that the message has reached them. They now have to build on a growing number of contacts, and make the EEC/ASEAN Business Council, we have supported right from the beginning a success story.

In short, our view of the evolution of our cooperation during the last four years is that it has achieved solid and tangible results.

I realise that you may not share entirely this view of our achievements but it is not our intention to mark the passage of the first phase of our cooperation with self-congratulation. Rather we should take this opportunity and in the follow-up to the Dublin ministerial meeting, to steadfastly look towards the future.

Given the faith we have in ourselves and in the potential of our two regions, it is evident that we have only scratched the surface of what can be achieved together.

The first five years of our Cooperation Agreement have been mainly devoted to trade and development. In the trade field, the framework has been established, the results are globally satisfactory and we will in the future continue to maintain an open market for ASEAN products.

During the same period, our development aid programmes have been concentrating essentially on rural infrastructure projects with substantial progress achieved. We will maintain these programmes as long and where they are necessary.

But the real challenge of our cooperation for the future should lead us to cooperate in sectors more compatible with the recent economic development of ASEAN countries. Priorities should include training, in particular industrial

training, which will pave the way for a durable and deeper economic cooperation.

The promotion of investments should be pursued on a larger scale with a better interaction between private and public sector.

Finally, in the science and technology sector, which is a field where there is a strong demand for cooperation on the ASEAN side, we feel that we can, through our technology and experience, contribute usefully to the development of ASEAN research and technology programmes.

Our goal should not be measured by artificial periods of time - the first 5 years of cooperation or even the next 5 years. After all, we are responsible for a relationship which has historical dimensions. The challenge which faces us is to successfully project this into the future.