



Concept Note

2nd ASEAN-India Youth Summit 2019 (February 2019)

Guwahati, Assam

Introduction

The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) comprises of Brunei Darussalem, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. India places ASEAN at the heart of its 'Act East Policy' and centre of the dream of an Asian century. India considers ASEAN its extended neighbourhood with which it shares many cultural links, based on Buddhist links as well as the enduring appeal of the Ramayana epic. The focus areas of cooperation between ASEAN member states and India for the future can be described in term of 3Cs - commerce, connectivity and culture. Enhanced connectivity to ASEAN region can also significantly factor in unlocking the economic energies. In essence, Connectivity is the reigning mantra as India deepens its diplomatic, economic and cultural ties with its extended neighbourhood.

With the success of the first India-ASEAN Youth Summit in 2017 held in Bhopal, India marking 25 years Commemorative Summit between India and ASEAN. To take forward and further strengthen India-ASEAN ties, India Foundation and Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India (MEA) have decided to organise the second leg of India-ASEAN Youth Summit on the theme "Connectivity is the pathway to shared prosperity." Connectivity with ASEAN in all its dimensions – physical, institutional and people-to-people continues to be a strategic priority for India. It is the key to facilitate socio-cultural exchanges and an important priority that we are working on. India shares both a land and maritime boundary with ASEAN. Tolerance, pluralism and diversity preserved, maintained and practiced by India and the ASEAN countries can be a unique example for the rest of the world. These salient characteristic can further strengthen the ties between the two.

Objectives

While the relationship between India and ASEAN are often being defined in economic and security terms, the people-to-people and cultural linkages between the two has flourished over the years and has made the India-ASEAN relationship a stronger, more sustainable partnership.

With the rise of the role of youth in the 21st century where an increasing number of youth taking up leadership role and ownership of their future, the Youth Summit comes in time to strengthen the people-to-people linkages through youth engagement.

The Youth Summit envisions becoming a platform for youth leaders to develop a value and sense of ownership for the India-ASEAN relationship based on better understanding of political and government system in a context of a rapidly developing region, connectivity in all aspects of physical, institutional and cultural. It will also be a forum for networking and sharing of ideas, initiatives and experiences among youth leaders in the region.

Short term:

- Within the broader theme of connectivity, establish country specific follow-up initiatives with individual “ownership” to maintain live engagement between India and the ASEAN countries on a bilateral level.
- The objective is to learn from the best practices and core competencies from one another for the common well-being of the entire region.
- Establishment of an India-ASEAN Youth Secretariat in India to coordinate further activities based on the Youth Declaration adopted in the first India-ASEAN Youth Summit held in 2017.
- Support people-to-people contacts and accessibility, including through visits to ASEAN and India of students, youth, tourists, sportspersons, academicians, think-tank scholars, local community representatives and diplomats.

Long term:

- Constant point for sustained engagement between young leaders from ASEAN and India.
- Promote the study, documentation and dissemination, of the vibrancy and resilience of India and ASEAN.
- Create enabling environment which encourages dialogue and facilitates the expression of youth creativity, and the participation and integration of youth in nation-building programmes and Indo-Pacific region-building programmes.
- Formation of India-ASEAN Youth Council.

Composition

We propose a delegation size of 200 comprising of youth leaders below the age of 35 years for the India-ASEAN Youth Summit.

- ASEAN: 150 (15 from each member nation)
- India: 50

This will include participation from political parties, think-tanks, media, business, bureaucracy, sports and art/culture. Purpose is to have a broad based engagement with long term potential. We will seek recommendations from Indian missions in respective countries and country missions in India.

Modes of Engagement

The Summit will be a 4 day event with a range of activities along the three broad pillars:

- Classroom learning
 - panel discussions, plenary sessions, group discussions
- Experiential learning
 - Interactions with tribal Hohos, site visits, tours, cultural performances – with focus on cultural & historical linkages between ASEAN region and India
- Peer learning
 - group activities, country presentations
- Witness the Act East Expo

Topics to cover (suggested)

We hope to cover the following three sets of topics in course of the 4-day event using the three modes of engagement mentioned in the previous section:

- Physical Connectivity
 - Many modes of connectivity bind ASEAN and India. Foremost among these are national and regional connectivity projects being developed to facilitate and enhance trade and investment and boost the untapped economic potential of both regions. Apart from land infrastructure projects, air and maritime connectivity are also crucial in deepening linkages between ASEAN and India.

- Socio-Cultural Connectivity
 - Civilisational linkages, Epics, North-east as a gateway to South East Asia, cuisines

 - Economic Connectivity
 - SDGs, promoting trade and investment, innovative research and solution searches, improvements in delivery of governance and financial inclusion through technology

 - Youth Connectivity
 - Sports, Academic, Research Cooperation, NGOs
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