

About the Asia-Middle East Dialogue (AMED)

Introduction

In this increasingly globalised world, developments in one region can impact others in many ways. Such interconnectivity creates opportunities that can be exploited as well as perceptions that must be managed. The Asia-Middle East Dialogue (AMED) was initiated by the former Prime Minister of Singapore (presently Senior Minister) Goh Chok Tong to foster dialogue and promote greater understanding between Asia and the Middle East on important political, economic and social developments.

2 Singapore hosted AMED I from 20-22 June 2005 at the Shangri-La Hotel. The theme was “Common Interests and Common Challenges”. Egypt hosted AMED II from 5-6 April 2008 in Sharm El Sheikh. The theme was “Partnership in Action Towards a Better Future”. The Third Asia-Middle East Dialogue (AMED III) will be held in 2010 in Thailand.

Rationale and Objectives

3 It is desirable for Asia and the Middle East to deepen their engagement. Profound political, economic and social developments are taking place in both Asia and the Middle East. These developments offer considerable opportunities for greater cooperation between the two regions.

4 While some countries in Asia and the Middle East have strong bilateral relations, inter-regional links between Asia and Middle East as a whole are relatively weak. Closer interaction and enhanced dialogue between Asia and the Middle East will enable both sides to share experiences and leverage on each other's strengths in the political, economic and social spheres for mutual benefit. Better mutual understanding will be an important step towards greater cooperation.

5 The key objectives of AMED are:

- To increase greater understanding between Asia and the Middle East at the people-to-people level as well as governmental level, to foster mutually-beneficial cooperation between the two regions.
- To produce policy recommendations that can be considered by participating governments on political, economic and social issues and

conceptualise initiatives to enhance relations between Asia and the Middle East.

- To provide a platform for all voices of moderation to be heard at a time when global events are polarising views about religion thereby promoting tolerance, inter-faith understanding and dialogue among civilisations.

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Annex B

Asia-Middle East Dialogue Member Countries

1. Afghanistan
2. Algeria
3. Bahrain
4. Bangladesh
5. Bhutan
6. Brunei
7. Cambodia
8. China
9. Comoros
10. Djibouti
11. Egypt
12. India
13. Indonesia
14. Iran
15. Iraq
16. Japan
17. Jordan
18. Kazakhstan
19. Kuwait
20. Kyrgyzstan
21. Laos
22. Lebanon
23. Libya
24. Malaysia
25. Maldives
26. Mauritania
27. Morocco
28. Myanmar
29. Nepal
30. Oman
31. Pakistan
32. Palestinian National Authority
33. Philippines
34. Qatar
35. Republic of Korea
36. Saudi Arabia
37. Singapore
38. Somalia
39. Sri Lanka
40. Sudan
41. Syria
42. Tajikistan
43. Thailand
44. Tunisia
45. Turkey
46. Turkmenistan
47. United Arab Emirates
48. Uzbekistan
49. Vietnam
50. Yemen

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About the Singapore Cooperation Programme

Since its independence in 1965 and as an island state with no natural resources, Singapore has relied on its human resource as the driving force behind its transformation from a Third World country into a modern city-state. The success of Singapore's transition was facilitated in part by the support and assistance from our foreign friends in human resource development. It is based on this same philosophy that Singapore began sharing its development experience with our friends from the developing countries since the late 1960s. We have focused on human resource capacity building programmes in areas where Singapore has the relevant experience and expertise.

2 The Singapore Cooperation Programme was formally established in 1992 to bring together under one framework the various technical assistance programmes offered by Singapore. Over the years, the scope of the SCP has expanded to meet the evolving needs of the recipient countries. When it first started in 1992, the Singapore Cooperation Programme trained less than a thousand participants from about 50 countries. Today, the Singapore Cooperation Programme trains an average of 6,000 international participants from many more countries annually. On a cumulative basis, the Singapore Cooperation Programme has reached out to 63,000 participants from 169 countries spanning across the Asia Pacific, Africa, Eastern Europe, Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean.

3 Under the Singapore Cooperation Programme, Singapore has initiated several customised bilateral programmes catering to the specific needs of recipient countries. For example, the Small Island Developing States Technical Cooperation Programme (SIDSTEC) was established in 1999 to assist Small Island Developing States in the areas of sustainable development. Under the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) launched in 2000, over 29,000 officials from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam have participated in the Singapore Cooperation Programme, with more than half of them having attended programmes conducted at the four training centres we have set up in Phnom Penh, Vientiane, Yangon and Hanoi. Under the auspices of the Asia Middle East Dialogue (AMED), Singapore has further contributed to human resource development in the Middle East through two regional training centres in Qatar and Jordan. The AMED Regional Training Centre for Public Administration (RTCPA) in Qatar, a Singapore-Qatar partnership, focuses on the training of civil servants and developing skills and strategies for excellence in public service. The AMED Regional Vocational Training Centre (RVTC) in

Jordan, a Singapore-Jordan partnership, focuses on developing skills in air-conditioning and heating systems maintenance and diagnostics for the construction industry. Singapore also helped to set up the Botswana National Productivity Centre (BNPC) in Botswana, which has since emerged as a regional training centre on productivity issues in southern Africa.

4 In addition to bilateral programmes, the Singapore Cooperation Programme has also forged strong partnerships with more than 30 developed countries and international organisations to run Third Country Training Programmes, leveraging on the strengths of our combined resources and expertise. We have been giving greater emphasis to aligning our programmes and coordinating with our development partners to maximise the outcome of our efforts.

5 As a responsible international citizen, Singapore remains committed to play its part in sharing our development experience and expertise with developing countries in the spirit of mutual learning and support. Through such collaborations with recipient and donor partners, we hope to foster friendships and understanding among countries in this global village. This is in line with the spirit of the Singapore Cooperation Programme, which is also encapsulated in its tagline “Joining Hands, Making Friends”.

6 More details are available on the Singapore Cooperation Website at www.scp.gov.sg.

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