

# NAM AND OTHER REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

# INTRODUCTION

- The end of the Second World War is a landmark in contemporary world politics. In 1945, the Allied Forces defeated the Axis Powers, ending the Second World War (1939-1945).
- The war devastated the world in terms of loss of human lives and civilian property. The end of the Second World War was also the beginning of the Cold War. The world war ended when the United States dropped two atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, causing Japan to surrender.
- With the defeat of Germany and Japan, the devastation of Europe and in many other parts of the world, the United States and the Soviet Union became the greatest powers in the world with the ability to influence events anywhere on earth.

## WHY NAM????

- The Cold War threatened to divide the world into two alliances. Under these circumstances, many of the newly independent countries, after gaining their independence from the colonial powers such as Britain and France, were worried that they would lose their freedom as soon as they gained formal independence.
- The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), gave the newly independent countries a way of staying out of the alliances.
- It is dedicated to representing the interests and aspirations of developing countries. The Non-Aligned Movement counts more than 100 member states, whose combined population amounts to more than half of the world's population.

# HOW AND WHEN IT EMERGED

- The Non-Aligned Movement emerged in the context of the wave of decolonization that followed World War II. At the 1955 [Bandung Conference](#) (the Asian-African Conference), the conference's attendees, many of whose countries had recently gained their independence, called for "abstention from the use of arrangements of collective defence to serve the particular interests of any of the big powers."
- In the context of the [Cold War](#), they argued, countries of the developing world should abstain from allying with one of the two superpowers (the United States and the U.S.S.R.) and should instead join in support of national self-determination against all forms of colonialism and imperialism.
- The Non-Aligned Movement was founded and held its first conference, the [Belgrade Conference](#), in 1961 under the leadership of [Josip Broz Tito](#) of Yugoslavia, [Gamal Abdel Nasser](#) of Egypt, [Jawaharlal Nehru](#) of India, [Kwame Nkrumah](#) of Ghana, and [Sukarno](#) of Indonesia. They are known as the 5 founders of the Non-Aligned Movement.

# NAM AND NIEO

The non-aligned countries were more than merely mediators during the Cold War. The challenge for most of the non-aligned countries — a majority of them were categorized as the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) — was to be more developed economically and to lift their people out of poverty. Economic development was also vital for the independence of the new countries. Without sustained development, a country could not be truly free. It would remain dependent on the richer countries including the colonial powers from which political freedom had been achieved.

The idea of a New International Economic Order (NIEO) originated with this realization. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) brought out a report in 1972 entitled Towards a New Trade Policy for Development. The report proposed a reform of the global trading system so as to:

- (i) give the LDCs control over their natural resources exploited by the developed Western countries.
- (ii) obtain access to Western markets so that the LDCs could sell their products and, therefore, make trade more beneficial for the poorer countries.
- (iii) reduce the cost of technology from the Western countries.

(iv) provide the LDCs with a greater role in international economic institutions

# NAM AFTER THE COLD WAR

Non-alignment as a strategy evolved in the Cold War context. It was based on a recognition that decolonized states share a historical affiliation and can become a powerful force if they come together. It meant that the poor and often very small countries of the world need not become followers of any of the big powers, that they could pursue an independent foreign policy. It was also based on a resolve to democratize the international system by thinking about an alternative world order to redress existing inequities.

There were doubts about the relevance and future of the Non-Aligned Movement after the end of the Cold War. These doubts were set at rest at the Tenth Summit held at Jakarta in 1992. This was the first summit which was held in the new world situation. The Tenth Summit, as the Jakarta Message adopted by the heads of state or governments of the Non-Aligned Movement stated, was held at “a time of profound change and rapid transition, a time of great promise as well as grave challenge, a time of opportunity amidst pervasive uncertainty”.

It stressed that the improvements in the international political climate had vindicated the validity and relevance of non-alignment. Simmering disputes, violent conflicts, aggression and foreign occupation, interference in the internal affairs of States, policies of hegemony and domination, ethnic strife, religious intolerance, new forms of racism and narrowly conceived nationalism are major and dangerous obstacles to harmonious coexistence among States and peoples and have even led to the disintegration of States and societies.

The message reiterated the commitment of the Non-Aligned Movement “to the shaping of a new international order, free from war, poverty, intolerance and injustice, a world based on the principles of peaceful coexistence and genuine interdependence, a world which takes into account the diversity of social systems and cultures”.

The Jakarta summit in 1992 was a turning point in Non- Aligned history since it was the first Summit after the end of the Cold War. It allowed the Movement to shift its focus from the rhetorics of the past to concrete work. The emphasis had shifted from the demands from the developed countries to cooperation with the developed countries.

There was also the manifestation of the consequences of the world which was believed to have become ‘unipolarity’, such as ‘unilateralism’ and the proclamation of the right by the sole superpower and its allies to interfere in the affairs of other countries and the effect ‘regime change’.

The membership of the Non-Aligned Movement comprises almost all the developing countries of the world and notwithstanding differences on some specific issues, there are many issues, including the fulfilment of the right to development that bind them together and make for the continuing relevance of the movement.

# REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS



# EUROPEAN UNION

European integration after 1945 was aided by the Cold War. America extended massive financial help for reviving Europe's economy under what was called the 'Marshall Plan'. The US also created a new collective security structure under NATO. Under the Marshall Plan, the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) was established in 1948 to channel aid to the west European states. It became a forum where the western European states began to cooperate on trade and economic issues.

The Council of Europe, established in 1949, was another step forward in political cooperation. The process of economic integration of European capitalist countries proceeded step by step (see Timeline of European Integration) leading to the formation of the European Economic Community in 1957.

This process acquired a political dimension with the creation of the European Parliament. The collapse of the Soviet bloc put Europe on a fast track and resulted in the establishment of the European Union in 1992.

The foundation was thus laid for a common foreign and security policy, cooperation on justice and home affairs, and the creation of a single currency. The European Union has evolved over time from an economic union to an increasingly political one.

The EU has started to act more as a nation state. While the attempts to have a Constitution for the EU have failed, it has its own flag, anthem, founding date, and currency. It also has some form of a common foreign and security policy in its dealings with other nations. The EU has economic, political and diplomatic, and military influence.

The EU is the world's biggest economy with a GDP of more than \$12 trillion in 2005, slightly larger than that of the United States. Its currency, the euro, can pose a threat to the dominance of the US dollar. Its share of world trade is three times larger than that of the United States allowing it to be more assertive in trade disputes with the US and China. Its economic power gives it influence over its closest neighbours as well as in Asia and Africa.

It also functions as an important bloc in international economic organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO). The EU also has political and diplomatic influence. Two members of the EU, Britain and France, hold permanent seats on the UN Security Council. The EU includes several non-permanent members of the UNSC.

# ASEAN {ASSOCIATION FOR SOUTH EAST ASIAN NATIONS}

ASEAN was established in 1967 by five countries of this region — Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand — by signing the Bangkok Declaration. The objectives of ASEAN were primarily to accelerate economic growth and through that ‘social progress and cultural development’.

A secondary objective was to promote regional peace and stability based on the rule of law and the principles of the United Nations Charter. Over the years, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Lao PDR, Myanmar (Burma) and Cambodia joined ASEAN taking its strength to ten.

Unlike the EU there is little desire in ASEAN for supranational structures and institutions. ASEAN countries have celebrated what has become known as the ‘ASEAN Way’, a form of interaction that is informal, non-confrontationist and cooperative. The respect for national sovereignty is critical to the functioning of ASEAN.

In 2003, ASEAN moved along to establish an ASEAN Community comprising three pillars, namely, the ASEAN Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community.

# BRICS

Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) is an acronym for the combined economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Economists at Goldman Sachs originally coined the term BRIC (without South Africa) in 2003. Analysts speculated that, by 2050, these four economies would be the most dominant. South Africa was added to the list on April 13, 2011 creating "BRICS".

In 2015, the five BRICS countries represent over 3.1 billion people, or about 41% of the world population; four out of five members (excluding South Africa) are in the top 10 of the world by population. As of 2018, these five nations have a combined nominal GDP of US\$18.6 trillion, about 23.2% of the gross world product, combined GDP (PPP) of around US\$40.55 trillion (32% of World's GDP PPP) and an estimated US\$4.46 trillion in combined foreign reserves.

As of 2011, five countries were among the fastest growing emerging markets. It's important to note that the Goldman Sachs thesis isn't that these countries are a political alliance (like the European Union) or a formal trading association. Instead, they have the potential to form a powerful economic bloc.

Leaders from BRICS countries regularly attend summits together and often act in concert with each others' interests. Due to lower labor and production costs, many companies also cite BRICS as a source of foreign expansion opportunity.

# NATO

**North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**, military alliance established by the North Atlantic Treaty (also called the Washington Treaty) of April 4, 1949, which sought to create a counterweight to Soviet armies stationed in central and eastern Europe after World War II. Its original members were [Belgium](#), [Canada](#), [Denmark](#), [France](#), [Iceland](#), [Italy](#), [Luxembourg](#), the [Netherlands](#), [Norway](#), [Portugal](#), the [United Kingdom](#), and the [United States](#).

The heart of NATO is expressed in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, in which the signatory members agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all.

From its founding, NATO's primary purpose was to unify and strengthen the Western Allies' military response to a possible invasion of western Europe by the Soviet Union and its [Warsaw Pact](#) allies.

After the [Cold War](#), NATO was reconceived as a “cooperative-security” organization whose [mandate](#) was to include two main objectives: to foster [dialogue](#) and cooperation with former adversaries in the [Warsaw Pact](#) and to “manage” conflicts in areas on the European periphery.

By the beginning of the 21st century, Russia and NATO had formed a strategic relationship. No longer considered NATO's chief enemy, Russia cemented a new cooperative bond with NATO in 2001 to address such common concerns as international terrorism, nuclear nonproliferation, and [arms control](#).

# COMMON WEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES

**Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)**, Russian **Sodruzhestvo Nezavisimyykh Gosudarstv**, free association of [sovereign](#) states that was formed in 1991 by [Russia](#) and 11 other republics that were formerly part of the Soviet Union. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) had its origins on December 8, 1991, when the elected leaders of Russia, [Ukraine](#), and [Belarus](#) (Belorussia) signed an agreement forming a new association to replace the crumbling [Union of Soviet Socialist Republics](#) (U.S.S.R.). The three Slavic republics were subsequently joined by the Central Asian republics of [Kazakhstan](#), [Kyrgyzstan](#), [Tajikistan](#), [Turkmenistan](#), and [Uzbekistan](#), by the Transcaucasian republics of [Armenia](#), [Azerbaijan](#), and [Georgia](#), and by [Moldova](#). (The remaining former Soviet republics—[Lithuania](#), [Latvia](#), and [Estonia](#)—declined to join the new organization.)

The CIS formally came into being on December 21, 1991, and began operations the following month, with the city of [Minsk](#) in Belarus designated as its administrative centre.

The CIS's functions are to coordinate its members' policies regarding their economies, [foreign relations](#), defense, immigration policies, environmental protection, and law enforcement. Its top governmental body is a council composed of the member republics' heads of state (i.e., presidents) and of government (prime ministers), who are assisted by committees of republic cabinet ministers in key areas such as economics and defense. The CIS's members pledged to keep both their armed forces and the former Soviet nuclear weapons stationed on their territories under a single unified command. In practice this proved difficult, however, as did the members' efforts to coordinate the introduction of market-type mechanisms and private ownership into their respective economies.

# COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS

**Commonwealth**, also called **Commonwealth of Nations**, formerly (1931–49) **British Commonwealth of Nations**, a free association of sovereign states comprising the United Kingdom and a number of its former dependencies who have chosen to maintain ties of friendship and practical cooperation and who acknowledge the British monarch as symbolic head of their association. In 1965 the Commonwealth Secretariat was established in London to organize and coordinate Commonwealth activities.

The Commonwealth differs from other international bodies. It has no formal constitution or bylaws. The members have no legal or formal obligation to one another; they are held together by shared traditions, institutions, and experiences as well as by economic self-interest.

Commonwealth action is based upon consultation between members, which is conducted through correspondence and through conversations in meetings. Each member country sends an emissary, called a high commissioner, to the capitals of the other members. A Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting is held every two years.

# The Indian Ocean Rim Association

The **Indian Ocean Rim Association** (IORA), formerly known as the Indian Ocean Rim Initiative and Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC), is an [international organisation](#) consisting of coastal states bordering the [Indian Ocean](#). The IORA is a regional forum, tripartite in nature, bringing together representatives of Government, Business and Academia, for promoting co-operation and closer interaction among them.

It is based on the principles of Open Regionalism for strengthening Economic Cooperation particularly on Trade Facilitation and Investment, Promotion as well as Social Development of the region.<sup>[5]</sup> The Coordinating Secretariat of IORA is located at [Ebene, Mauritius](#).

The Indian Ocean Rim Association is an inter-governmental organization which was established on 7 March 1997. As the third largest ocean woven together by trade routes, commands control of major sea-lanes carrying half of the world's container ships, one third of the world's bulk cargo traffic and two thirds of the world's oil shipments, the Indian Ocean remains an important lifeline to international trade and transport. Home to nearly 2.7 billion people, IORA remains committed to build and expand understanding and mutually beneficial cooperation through a consensus based evolutionary and non-intrusive approach in the rapid changing environment faced by the region.

Today, IORA is a dynamic organization of 22 Member States and 9 Dialogue Partners, with an ever-growing momentum for mutually beneficial regional cooperation through a consensus-based, evolutionary and non-intrusive approach.

# SAARC

South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC), organization of South Asian nations, founded in 1985 and dedicated to economic, technological, social, and cultural development emphasizing collective self-reliance. Its seven founding members are [Bangladesh](#), [Bhutan](#), [India](#), the [Maldives](#), [Nepal](#), [Pakistan](#), and [Sri Lanka](#). [Afghanistan](#) joined the organization in 2007.

Meetings of heads of state are usually scheduled annually; meetings of foreign secretaries, twice annually. Headquarters are in [Kathmandu](#), Nepal.

The charter stipulates that decisions are to be unanimous and that “bilateral and [contentious](#) issues” are to be avoided.

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is a major regional initiative by the South Asian states to evolve cooperation through multilateral means. It began in 1985.

Unfortunately, due to persisting political differences, SAARC has not had much success. SAARC members signed the South Asian Free Trade (SAFTA) agreement which promised the formation of a free trade zone for the whole of South Asia.

# BIMSTEC

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a regional multilateral organization. Its members lie in the littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal constituting a contiguous regional unity. Out of the 7 members, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

This sub-regional organization came into being in 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration. Initially, it was formed with four Member States with the acronym 'BIST-EC' (Bangladesh, India, Sri-Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation). With the admission of Nepal and Bhutan in 2004, the name of the grouping was changed to 'Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation' (BIMSTEC).

It is a Bridge between South and South East Asia and represents a reinforcement of relations among these countries, a Platform for intra-regional cooperation between SAARC and ASEAN members and home to around 1.5 billion people that constitute around 22% of the global population. With a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of 2.7 trillion economy, BIMSTEC Member States have been able to sustain an average 6.5% economic growth trajectory in the last five years. A fourth of the world's traded goods cross the bay every year.

BIMSTEC not only connects South and Southeast Asia, but also the ecologies of the Great Himalayas and the Bay of Bengal. It mainly aims to create an enabling environment for rapid economic development; accelerate social progress; and promote collaboration on matters of common interest in the region.

# SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), or Shanghai Pact, is a Eurasian political, economic, and security alliance, the creation of which was announced on 15 June 2001 in Shanghai, China by the leaders of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan; the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Charter, formally establishing the organization, was signed in June 2002 and entered into force on 19 September 2003. The original five nations, with the exclusion of Uzbekistan, were previously members of the Shanghai Five group, founded on 26 April 1996. Since then, the organization has expanded its membership to eight countries when India and Pakistan joined SCO as full members on 9 June 2017 at a summit in Astana, Kazakhstan.

The Heads of State Council (HSC) is the supreme decision-making body in the SCO, it meets once a year and adopts decisions and guidelines on all important matters of the organization. Military exercises are also regularly conducted among members to promote cooperation and coordination against terrorism and other external threats, and to maintain regional peace and stability.

The SCO is widely regarded as the "alliance of the East", due to its growing centrality in Asia-Pacific, and has been the primary security pillar of the region. It is the largest regional organisation in the world in terms of geographical coverage and population, covering three-fifths of the Eurasian continent and nearly half of the human population.

# ARAB LEAGUE

Arab League, also called League of Arab States (LAS), Arabic Al-Jāmi‘a Al-‘Arabīyah or Al-Jāmi‘a Ad-Duwal Al-‘Arabīyah, regional organization of Arab states in the Middle East, formed in Cairo on March 22, 1945. The founding member states were Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Transjordan (now Jordan), Saudi Arabia, and Yemen.

Each member has one vote on the League Council, decisions being binding only on those states that have voted for them.

The aims of the league in 1945 were to strengthen and coordinate the political, cultural, economic, and social programs of its members and to mediate disputes among them or between them and third parties.

The signing on April 13, 1950, of an agreement on joint defense and economic cooperation also committed the signatories to coordination of military defense measures. In its early years the Arab League concentrated mainly on economic, cultural, and social programs.

In 1959 it held the first Arab petroleum congress and in 1964 established the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO).

# OPEC

- ▶ OPEC, in full Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, multinational organization that was established to coordinate the petroleum policies of its members and to provide member states with technical and economic aid.
- ▶ OPEC was established at a conference held in Baghdad September 10–14, 1960, and was formally constituted in January 1961 by five countries: Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, and Venezuela.
- ▶ OPEC's headquarters, first located in Geneva, was moved to Vienna in 1965. OPEC members coordinate policies on oil prices, production, and related matters at semiannual and special meetings of the OPEC Conference.
- ▶ The Board of Governors, which is responsible for managing the organization, convening the Conference, and drawing up the annual budget, contains representatives appointed by each member country; its chair is elected to a one-year term by the Conference. OPEC also possesses a Secretariat, headed by a secretary-general appointed by the Conference for a three-year term.
- ▶ OPEC claims that its members collectively own about four-fifths of the world's proven petroleum reserves, while they account for two-fifths of world oil production. Members differ in a variety of ways, including the size of oil reserves, geography, religion, and economic and political interests.

# MEKONG-GANGA COOPERATION

- ▶ The [Mekong–Ganga](#) Cooperation (MGC) was established on November 10, 2000, at [Vientiane, Laos](#) at the First MGC Ministerial Meeting. It comprises six member countries, namely India(Look-East connectivity projects), Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.
- ▶ The four areas of cooperation are tourism, culture, education, and transportation.<sup>[1]</sup> The organization takes its name from the Ganga and the Mekong, two large rivers in the region.
- ▶ Both the Ganga and the Mekong are civilizational rivers, and the MGC initiative aims to facilitate closer contacts among the people inhabiting these two major river basins.
- ▶ The MGC is also indicative of the civilizational, cultural and commercial linkages among the member countries of the MGC down the centuries.
- ▶ The Mekong is a trans-boundary river in Southeast Asia. It is the world's 12th-longest river. From the Tibetan Plateau the river runs through China's Yunnan Province, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. In 1995, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam established the Mekong River Commission to assist in the management and coordinated use of the Mekong's resources. In 1996 China and Myanmar became "dialogue partners" of the MRC and the six countries now work together within a cooperative framework.
- ▶ The extreme seasonal variations in flow and the presence of rapids and waterfalls in the Mekong make navigation difficult. Even so, the river is a major trade route between western China and Southeast Asia.

# ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION

*The Organization of Islamic Cooperation is the second largest intergovernmental body after the UN.*

The OIC's mission statement bills it as "the collective voice of the Muslim world" that works to "protect the interests of the Muslim world". It was established by 24 member states in 1969. And its Headquarters is located in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

According to its charter, the OIC aims to preserve Islamic values, safeguard and defend the national sovereignty and independence of member states and to contribute to international peace and security.

Today, with 57 member states from four continents, the OIC is the second-largest intergovernmental organization in the world after the United Nations, with a collective population reaching over 1.8 billion. The majority of its member states are Muslim-majority countries, while others have significant Muslim populations, including several African and South American countries.

While the 22 members of the Arab League are also part of the OIC, the organization has several significant non-Arab member states, including Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. It also has five observer members, including Russia and Thailand.

The OIC holds an Islamic Summit once every three years. At the summit, heads of state discuss ways to achieve the charter's objectives and make policy decisions that concern its member states.

# G - 8

The G8 summit is an annual meeting between leaders from eight of the most powerful countries in the world.

The aim is to try to tackle global problems by discussing big issues and planning what action to take. The leaders of the countries meet every year in a different member country.

G8 stands for Group of Eight and is made up of leaders from Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the UK and the United States of America. The leaders of these countries take it in turns to be president of the G8, with the leader of the host country acting as the president that year.

The first summit was in 1975 - but back then it was just six countries, known as the G6.

It was formed because of big worldwide money troubles in the early 1970s, which prompted the US to form something called the library group, a meeting of senior financial officials from Europe, Japan and the U.S. In 1975, heads of governments became involved and they agreed to meet every year.

The G6 was made up of France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK and America. It then changed to G7 when Canada joined in 1976 and G8 with Russia in 1998.

Recent summits have seen big protests and sometimes violence, Critics say it's wrong that big countries like China and India are not represented. There are also no African or Latin American members and some says that the G8 leaders ignore the needs of the wider world.

# APEC

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), organization that seeks to promote free trade and economic cooperation throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Established in 1989 in response to the growing interdependence of Asia-Pacific economies and the advent of regional economic blocs (such as the [European Union](#) and the [North American Free Trade Area](#)) in other parts of the world, APEC works to raise [living standards](#) and education levels through sustainable [economic growth](#) and to foster a sense of [community](#) and an appreciation of shared interests among Asia-Pacific countries.

At the end of the 1990s APEC's membership included its 12 founding members—Australia, [Brunei](#), [Canada](#), [Indonesia](#), [Japan](#), [South Korea](#), [Malaysia](#), [New Zealand](#), the [Philippines](#), [Singapore](#), [Thailand](#), and the United States—as well as [Chile](#), [China](#), [Hong Kong](#), [Mexico](#), [Papua New Guinea](#), [Peru](#), [Russia](#), [Taiwan](#), and [Vietnam](#). The Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC), the [South Pacific Forum](#) (SPF), and the secretariat of the [Association of Southeast Asian Nations](#) (ASEAN) maintain observer status.

APEC's effectiveness has been limited by its requirement that all its decisions be made by [consensus](#). Although APEC seeks unanimity, decisions can be taken in the absence of unanimity; however, decisions are not legally binding on member governments. The organization's chair, which rotates annually, hosts an annual summit meeting and meetings of foreign and economic ministers and other senior officials. The APEC secretariat, established in 1993 and headquartered in Singapore, provides advisory and logistic services as well as research and analysis.

# GCC

**Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)**, political and economic alliance of six Middle Eastern countries—Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman. The GCC was established in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in May 1981. The purpose of the GCC is to achieve unity among its members based on their common objectives and their similar political and cultural identities, which are rooted in Arab and Islamic cultures. Presidency of the council rotates annually.

Arguably the most important article of the GCC charter is Article 4, which states that the alliance was formed to strengthen relations among its member countries and to promote cooperation among the countries' citizens.

GCC agreements typically focus on either security or economic coordination. Economic coordination included attempts at economic union, though integrative agreements were often lacklustre in comparison with policy coordination.

While membership of the GCC remained consistent throughout its first several decades, changes in regional relationships sometimes led to speculation on changes in membership. Expansion appeared possible when the interests of Gulf countries aligned with those of other Arab states.

# RCEP

The **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)** is a proposed [free trade agreement](#) between the ten member states of the [Association of Southeast Asian Nations \(ASEAN\)](#) ([Brunei](#), [Cambodia](#), [Indonesia](#), [Laos](#), [Malaysia](#), [Myanmar](#), the [Philippines](#), [Singapore](#), [Thailand](#), [Vietnam](#)) and the six indo-Pacific states with which ASEAN has existing free trade agreements ([China](#), [Japan](#), [South Korea](#), [India](#), [Australia](#) and [New Zealand](#)).

RCEP negotiations were formally launched in November 2012 at the ASEAN Summit in Cambodia.

RCEP is the world's largest [economic bloc](#), covering nearly half of the global economy. [According to estimates by PwC](#), the [Gross Domestic Product \(GDP, PPP\)](#) of RCEP member states is likely to amount to nearly \$250 trillion by 2050, or a quarter of a [quadrillion](#) dollars, with the combined GDPs of China and India making up more than 75% of the amount. RCEP's share of the global economy could account for half of the estimated \$0.5 quadrillion global (GDP, PPP) by 2050.

RCEP has been criticized by [free culture](#) activists for containing "quite simply the worst provisions on copyright [...] ever seen in a trade agreement."<sup>[33]</sup> Global health care activists have criticized the agreement for potentially forcing India to end its cheap supply of [generic medications](#) to poor countries.<sup>[34]</sup>

# ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES

**Organization of American States (OAS)**, organization formed to promote economic, military, and cultural cooperation among its members, which include almost all of the independent states of the [Western Hemisphere](#). The OAS's main goals are to prevent any outside state's intervention in the Western Hemisphere and to maintain peace between the various states within the hemisphere.

After the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, the OAS became more active in encouraging democratic government in member states, and it became a leader in observing and monitoring elections to safeguard against fraud and irregularities.

The General Secretariat is the administrative backbone of the OAS and is headed by a secretary-general elected to a five-year term. The chief policy-making body of the OAS is the General Assembly, which holds annual meetings at which member states are represented by their foreign ministers or chiefs of state.

The OAS has settled border conflicts between various member countries since the late 1940s. For example, it provided the framework for a truce and subsequent resolution of the [Soccer War](#) (1969) between [Honduras](#) and [El Salvador](#).

# G - 20

Group of 20 (G20), international body created in 1999 that provides a forum for strategic economic communication between industrialized and developing countries. The G20 originated as a response to the economic crises of the late 1990s; it expanded on the work of the [Group of Eight \[G8\]](#) in its political incarnation by including countries that previously had been left out of the global discussion.

Its membership [comprises](#) 19 countries:

[Argentina](#), [Australia](#), [Brazil](#), [Canada](#), [China](#), [France](#), [Germany](#), [India](#), [Indonesia](#), [Italy](#), [Japan](#), [Mexico](#), [Russia](#), [Saudi Arabia](#), [South Africa](#), [South Korea](#), [Turkey](#), the [United Kingdom](#), and the United States and the [European Union \(EU\)](#).

The countries are represented by finance ministers and [central bank](#) governors, while the EU is represented by the [European Central Bank](#) and a rotating council presidency. The [World Bank](#) and the [International Monetary Fund](#) also participate.