



The expo is the perfect place to find new partners.



Forum on infrastructure cooperation during last year's expo



Special exhibition area for promoting investment

China-ASEAN Expo boosts regional ties

By HUANG FEIFEI

A Sino-ASEAN exposition in Nanning, the capital of South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, has done a great deal to increase exchanges and cooperation in various fields among China and ASEAN member countries through forums and dialogues.

The annual China-ASEAN Expo (CAEXPO) was established in 2004 by the Ministry of Commerce and the economic administrations of 10 ASEAN countries.

38

state leaders

have taken part in the annual expo in the past several years

Since then, there have been more than 180 high-level forums and cultural and sports activities taking place in relation to the CAEXPO sessions.

The forums have covered trade, investment, travel, technology, ports, customs regulations, finance and the media. Nearly 40 state leaders and more than 1,300 ministry-level officials have taken part in these.

One forum on the culture industry has become a major source of cultural exchanges and has helped increase understanding among the people of China and ASEAN members. It also resulted in an international book fair that gives publishers in China and ASEAN countries access to overseas markets.

Another example was a logistics forum, in November, 2006, which



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The China-ASEAN Expo provides opportunities for companies looking for new business and plays an active role in China-ASEAN exchanges.

dealt with logistics problems in China-ASEAN trade. It helped improve regional services and even led to the establishment of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area.

The China-ASEAN Summit on Financial Cooperation and Development, in October, 2009, was a forum

on opportunities and challenges in regional cooperation in the finance world and how to handle international risks and facilitate trade and investment.

This led to expectations that countries in the region would open their finance and capital markets, ease

restrictions on market entry in the financial sector, develop new financial products, and promote cooperation in settlements.

The heads of Chinese commercial banks, such as the Bank of Communications and China Merchants Bank, who attended the forum,

pledged that they would cooperate more with their counterparts in ASEAN member states.

This year's CAEXPO, scheduled to be held from Oct 21 to 26, has a theme of "cooperation in environmental protection" and is expected to increase cooperation in this area



It's a new lease on life for this 20-year friendship

By LIU XIAOQIONG AND HUANG FEIFEI

This year is the 20th anniversary of the partnership between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and, in view of that, China wants to increase the mutual trust with ASEAN members and beneficial cooperation in all fields, a Chinese official remarked recently.

There have been great changes in the world over the past 20 years and China's relations with ASEAN countries have developed over a wide range, State Councilor Dai Bingguo, said at a reception marking the 20th anniversary, at Beijing's Diaoyutai State Guesthouse, in late August.

Those relations may have been affected by global political and economic shifts and have had their twists and turns, Dai continued, but he praised China-ASEAN relations and said that this is the China-ASEAN Friendly Exchange Year.

"China is willing to promote connections on the seas with ASEAN countries, and make this a new area in China-ASEAN cooperation," he added.

It was not until 1990, and ASEAN's 23rd anniversary, that Indonesia restored diplomatic relations with China, which laid a foundation for further friendly ties with ASEAN countries.

Later Singapore, Brunei and others established official relations with China, and China had diplomatic ties with all the ASEAN members. By then, China-ASEAN relations had entered a new era of mutual trust and partnerships.

China and ASEAN began their formal dialogue in 1991 and, in these 20 years, they have made



State leaders of China and ASEAN member countries celebrate the 15th anniversary of China-ASEAN dialogue relations in 2006.



State leaders of China and ASEAN member countries at the third China-ASEAN Business and Investment Summit.

some substantial progress in economic exchanges.

China is now ASEAN's top trade partner and ASEAN has replaced Japan as China's third largest trade partner.

Bilateral investment has continued to grow over the past 20 years, and amounted to \$80 billion by the end of June of this year.

To date, China has invested close to \$13 billion in ASEAN countries,

in all, so they are obviously an important destination for Chinese investment.

China announced in 2009 that it would provide credit for ASEAN countries and set up a \$10 billion China-ASEAN Fund for investment cooperation.

So far, China has provided \$12.2 billion worth of loans to ASEAN for infrastructure projects, such as bridges, roads, and power stations.

And ASEAN has become China's fifth largest export market for the service trade.

When the Asian financial crisis hit in 1997, China insisted on not letting the yuan depreciate and so, was able to weather the storm with ASEAN countries, some of whom have said that China's support during that difficult time was impressive.

In 2004, after the disastrous tsunami hit Indonesia, China sent rescue teams and offered \$650 million worth of aid.

After the financial crisis of 2008, China decided to set up that investment cooperation fund in spite of a slowdown in its own economy, and to provide \$15 billion worth of credit.

China has also provided \$270 million worth of aid to underdeveloped countries in the ASEAN area, such as Cambodia, Laos, and Burma.

At the same time, China has received much valuable support and help from ASEAN countries in times of difficulty such as the SARS and Avian Flu outbreaks.

Now, as part of the series of activities surrounding the 20th anniversary of the partnership, China's foreign affairs and education ministries held a China-ASEAN friendship quiz in September, with support from the Guangxi regional government.

It drew 25 contestants from China and ASEAN member countries, who traveled to Nanning, the capital of Guangxi, on Oct 23 for various activities.

Yu Junhong, a contestant from Singapore, said that the event had given him some wonderful memories. "I'll remember China and Guangxi, and keep my friends here always in mind."



The annual folk song festival, which has run 12 years, has been entertaining people and offering an art gala.

Nanning's int'l song fest is an exciting cultural exchange

By HUANG ZHAOHUA

The Nanning International Folk Song Art Festival, scheduled to open on Friday night, will put the city in the limelight once again.

The annual event, which started in 1999, has attracted top artists from around the world and offered a wide variety of art over its 12-year lifespan. It offers a heavy mix of ethnic customs from all over, international vision and a modern style, and has played an active role in promoting cultural exchanges between different countries.

In the meantime, Nanning, the capital of the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region, was made the permanent site of the China-ASEAN Exposition in 2004, so the folk festival can run concurrently and be tied to the expo's opening ceremony. This has helped the festival gain a wider international reputation.

In 2005, the International Festivals & Events Association called the Nanning folk festival one of China's most

internationally influential festivals.

In 2006, the festival organizers, together with China Central Television and Austria's national television station, expanded the Nanning festival's influence to Europe while celebrating the 35th anniversary of Sino-Austrian relations.

More than a third of Guangxi's people are members of ethnic groups, and the region has long been known as the home of folk songs, which is still a way to express friendship and love in many villages.

The festival also provides a place for cultural exchanges and to show the city's unique charms to the world.

The event is also used to promote tourism and to help bring investment to the city.

This year's festival is expected to be more attractive and more influential in its artistry, modernity and internationalism to increase cultural interaction with other countries. It will focus on the local Zhuang ethnic culture and the traditional friendship between China and ASEAN.