

Preface

This is a book on the economics of Southeast Asia. It deals with cross-country and inter-temporal analyses of the macroeconomic problems, issues, policies and trends in all the ten countries that form ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations). Hopefully, the book is of use to all graduate students on Southeast Asia, not just economics graduate students. Hopefully too, the book is also of interest and use to policy makers in the region and to others interested in the policy options in these ten countries.

As the Table of Contents of the book shows, this book discusses and evaluates population policies, trade policies, industrialisation policies, agricultural policies, monetary policies, fiscal policies, regional co-operation, the 1997/98 financial crisis and prospects for further development. Some basic facts and key dates on each of the ten countries are also separately given for ease of reference. Readers familiar with Southeast Asia can ignore the basic information. Similarly, the book need not be read in the sequence that is being presented. As Southeast Asia is still essentially an agricultural region, several chapters have been devoted to agricultural development.

The book is entitled *The Long Road Ahead*. It is intended, *inter-alia*, to focus attention on the distance between Southeast Asia and the developed countries. It also discusses some of the wrong roads taken, because of special circumstances, by these countries.

Let us hope that the vision for Southeast Asia to become a developed region economically can be realised sooner than later, but hopefully, not indefinitely. I also hope that this book can be of some use or

help in supplying ideas and concepts to transform the region from underdevelopment to development.

The book is written by an “insider”, looking at his own region, Southeast Asia; not by an “outsider” evaluating the Southeast Asian region.

Lastly, the analysis in the book shows that the road ahead to achieve developed country status is long for the Southeast Asian region as a whole. It must, however, be added that although the attainment of affluence is a worthy objective, of importance too is how that affluence is to be achieved, as Ursula K. LeGuin beautifully puts it “It is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters, in the end.”

LIM Chong Yah
Nanyang Business School
Nanyang Technological University
SINGAPORE
December 2000