



Essay Form

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Country:

Singapore

Theme: The roles of my country and of Asia in the future.

Length: Maximum of 1,000 words

Language: English

The future of Asia is uncertain --- be it in the environmental, economic or political aspects. With increased globalisation, our rapid consumption of goods and services today makes our earth less sustainable. We certainly cannot predict when the next Asian Financial Crisis might hit us in the future, and fractiousness between states over differences in political opinion puts Asia at risk of falling apart.

Yet, in this uncertainty, how does Singapore, my country, play a part in ensuring and upholding the stability, peace and security, for the many generations to come?

I realised that there is a way to better predict the future of Asia and preparing Asia to be ever-more ready in combating these challenges.

And that is through regional cooperation between the ASEAN states.

Singapore, being a small country, has always stood up for the independence and sovereignty of states. At the same time, Singapore also reckons that we cannot survive alone. In fact, regional cooperation is the way to go for Asia in this increasingly unstable world.

Asia in itself is already so diverse, hence it is inevitable for the ASEAN states to have disagreements in proceeding with regional cooperative measures. It took many years before Singapore's proposal for an ASEAN Common Market was implemented in 2016. In the face of increasing uncertainty as evident in the disputes over the South China Sea, disagreements over China's recent One Belt, One Road policy, the fear over China's aggressive foreign policy has further necessitated the need for states in Asia to come together and join forces in order to better plan for a stable future.

Singapore as an entrepot trade hub has much to contribute in the economic developments of Southeast Asia. The ASEAN Common Market sounds ambitious when one draws parallels to the European Union's Common Market, but Singapore's emphasis on free trade will propel Asia towards a highly integrated region, strengthening Asia for the challenges to come.

Singapore also plays a part in ASEAN environmental education efforts via the ASEAN Plus Three Youth Environment Forum (AYEF). Singapore's National Environment Agency recognises the need to uphold environmental sustainability and not just solely focus on economic development.

Furthermore, Singapore has been helping 170 developing countries by sharing knowledge to countries through climate change programmes. Recognising that direct-cash financial aid might not be the most effective in the long-run, Singapore builds the capacity of these countries through education.

In conclusion, despite the economic success Singapore has basked in, we must not forget the true importance of regional cooperation and assisting less developed countries so that we do not leave anyone behind in our pursuit for GDP growth.