Overview of ASEAN and Its Influence on Community-Building between Internal and External Regions

ASEAN is a regional organization comprised mostly of vulnerable member countries; therefore many concerns have been raised about the region’s political, economic and social development as well as their approach to security management. Critics feel that this combination has prevented ASEAN from becoming a strong organization capable of tackling its regional dilemmas, including the scourge of human trafficking. This chapter argues that despite its stature, ASEAN has the potential to serve its member countries and non-member countries as a center of identifying various concerns and exchanging their best methods and strategies to redress such transnational crimes based on its existing influences towards these communities.

In order to fully understand the issue of human trafficking in the region, it is important to look at its origin and current vision for development. The first section of this chapter traces the internal and external political security challenges that ASEAN member countries have faced in establishing ASEAN. ASEAN’s role in dispute settlement to sustain peace and stability during numerous political conflicts in the region illustrates their influence both within the region and the international community. For instance, ASEAN played a diplomatic role in Vietnamese ending the territorial attack of the Vietnamese government following its invasion of Cambodia.

ASEAN also played a neutral role in South China Sea conflict demonstrating its efforts in preventing intensive political conflict. In addition to political

1 Christopher B. Roberts, *State Weakness and Political Values: Ramifications for the ASEAN Community, in ASEAN* and the Institutionalization of East Asia 12 (Ralf Emmers, ed., 2012).
2 Id.
influence, ASEAN has attempted to play a role in promoting human rights through “the three-pillar community.”5 ASEAN has also planned to advocate its member countries to promote and protect the rights of people through political-security, economic, and socio-cultural communities. While the notion of the "ASEAN Way"6 has been an influence on these communities, this section points out its core principles in order to perceive the main concept and method of dealing with security concerns of ASEAN.

Section two of this chapter discusses the debates on the human rights approach of ASEAN to confirm that ASEAN has planned to provide fundamental rights for its people. ASEAN has attempted to maintain peace and unity through the establishment of the ASEAN Charter7 (its first legally-binding instrument of human rights) and ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on

