



Research Paper

An Overview of Sub Regional Governmental International Institutions in Asia: Achievements, Failures and Future

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the process of globalization, several international actors have emerged besides states. The Intergovernmental cooperation resulting from treaties or agreements in the forms of Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) has been viewed as an appropriate means for dealing with various issues in global and regional levels. An International Governmental Organisation (IGO) can be said to be an organisation composed primarily of sovereign states, or of other IGOs. IGOs are established by treaties or other agreements that act as a charter creating the group. Examples include the AU, EU, UN, the world bank, Ecowas *et cetera*.³

The term IGOs refers to an entity created by treaty, involving two or more nations, to work in good faith, on issues of common interest. In the absence of a treaty, an IGO does not exist in the legal sense. For example G8 is a group of nations that have annual economic and political summits. IGOs that are formed by treaties are more advantageous because they are subject to international law and have the ability to enter into enforceable agreements among themselves or with states.⁴

1.1 Classification of IGOS

Although not the focus of this research, but it is important to establish that International Institutions or Organizations are varied and have been classified on the basis of functions, means of formation, geography, *et cetera*.

IGOs are typically organized by their membership and purpose. For example, the United Nations is called a global organisation or an international institution with a universal Character⁵ because all countries are allowed membership.

Some IGOs are regional and others are sub-regional and limit their membership to states within the designated regions. Organisations such as AU, EU are regional, while ASEAN, ECOWAS, *et cetera* are sub-regional. Other IGOs are referred to as selective organisations because they base their membership on certain criteria apart from geography. The organization of The Islamic Conference, for example bases its membership on religious affiliations while OPEC's membership is based on oil production. There are also specialized IGOs such as NATO, WHO and others.

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³ Union of International Associations (1907 - 2019) website, <https://www.ia.org/> yb3. Accessed 4 October, 2019

⁴ Harvard Law School, International Governmental Organisations (IGOs), <https://www.hls.harvard.edu/>. Accessed 10 October 2019

⁵ M Shaw, International Law, Seventh edition, Cambridge University Press, UK. 2014

IGOs are distinguishable from NGOs in that NGOs are formed by two (2) or more individuals rather than by nations. NGOs are typically independent of governments and are, supposedly non- profit organizations.⁶

1.2 The Case for Regional and Sub-Regional Organisations.

The UN Charter has given a tacit approval for the establishment of Regional Organisations especially in the area of peace, Security and conflict resolutions.⁷

Regional Organisations often refers to a subset of international (inter-governmental) organisations. There are also sub-regional organizations whose sphere of operations are limited to a particular area within the region for example ECOWAS is limited to West Africa, SADC is limited to Southern Africa *etcetera*.

Regional Organizations (ROs) are, in a sense, International Organizations (IOs), as they incorporate international membership and encompass geopolitical entities that operationally transcend a single nation state. However, their membership is characterized by boundaries and demarcations characteristic to a defined and unique geography, such as continents, or geopolitics, such as economic blocs. They have been established to foster cooperation and political and economic integration or dialogue among states or entities within a restrictive geographical or geopolitical boundary. They both reflect common patterns of development and history that have been fostered since the end of World War II as well as the fragmentation inherent in globalization, which is why their institutional characteristics vary from loose cooperation to formal regional integration.⁸

1.3 A bit about Asia

Asia is the world's largest and most diverse continent. It has both the highest and lowest points on the surface of the earth. It has the longest coast line of any continent. It is bounded by the Arctic Ocean to the North, the Pacific Ocean to the east, the Indian Ocean to the South, The Red Sea (as well as the inland sea of the Atlantic Ocean- the Mediterranean and Black Seas), to the Southwest, and Europe to the west. The Suez Canal demarcates Asia with Africa. The land boundary between Asia and Europe is blurred, and is not within the context of this paper.⁹

The total Area of Asia including Asia Russia, but excluding the Island of New Guinea amounts to some 17 226, 200 sq miles (44,614, 000 km²), roughly 1/3 of the land surface of the Earth.

Mount Everest, the tallest peak in the world and the lowest point – the Dead Sea and the world's deepest continental trough occupied by Lake Baikal are all in Asia.

Asia is the birthplace of all the world's major religions- Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Zorostranism, and Judaism.

1.3.1 The Regions of Asia:

Asia is naturally divided into various parts for example;¹⁰

- The Central Asia which consists of former Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan. They are called the "STANS".

- The Southeast Asia situated east of India and South of China, it houses countries like; Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Vietnam and Singapore. Malaysia, The Sultanate of Brunei, Indonesia and Philippines are also considered part of the sub-region.

- North Asia – China dominates the North – Asian sub-region as its territory covers more than 80% of the total considered area, other countries here include; North Korea, South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau South, Mongolia.

-South Asia: Sri-Lanka, Bangladesh, India, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Nepal, the Maldives.

-Western Asia – The majority of these regions is often referred to as Middle East but overlaps considerably into Asia and countries here include; Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia.

⁶ Harvard Law School, International Government Organisations (IGOs), <https://www.hls.harvard.edu>

⁷ Repertory of UN Organs Vol. 2(1945-1954), Chapter VIII - UN Charter, Arts. 52, 53 and 54. Codification Division Publications of the UN. <https://www.legal.un.org/repertory.shtml>. Accessed 20 October 2019

⁸ K Spandler, *Regional Organisations in International Society: ASEAN, the EU and the Politics of Normative Arguing*. Macmillan Press. Palgrave. 2018. ISBN 978-3-319-96895-7

⁹ P Gouuru, Asia continent, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, C Narasimhan and Y Yefremov(eds). <<https://www.britannica.com/place/Asia>> Accessed 5 October 2019.

¹⁰ A Pariona(ed), *World Atlas, The Five Regions of Asia – Asia countries and Regions*. <<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-five-regions-of-Asian.htm>>. Accessed 5 October 2019.

II. The Regional International Governmental Organisations in the ASIA include, but not limited to:

2.1 THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH EAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN).

It was established in August 1967 with the purpose of accelerating the economic growth, social progress and cultural development of the region, and promoting regional peace and stability. It was established in Bangkok, Thailand with the signing of the ASEAN DECLARATION (Bangkok Declaration) by the founding fathers of ASEAN, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Brunei Joined on 7th January 1984, Vietnam on 28th July 1995, LAOS and Myanmar on 23 July 1997 and Cambodia joined on 30 April 1999, making up the 10 member states of ASEAN presently. Another treaty incorporating the fundamental principles of ASEAN was adopted in 1976 – The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South East Asia (TAC).

The ASEAN charter was signed at the 13th ASEAN summit on November 20th, 2007. After each country ratified the Charter, it went into effect on December 15th, 2008.¹¹ The preamble to the Charter lists the member states of the ASEAN to include; Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao people's Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam.

The Journey to the formalisation of ASEAN in a charter has been a tortuous one. The release of the "Declaration of ASEAN Concord II" in 2003 in Bali marked the major action towards the establishment of the ASEAN charter, followed by the Vietnam Action programme (VAP) at the 10th ASEAN Summit in 2004. These two action plans were geared towards the realisation of 'the ASEAN Vision 2020'.

In the 11th ASEAN summit in December, 2005, ASEAN heads signed the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on establishment of an ASEAN Charter and agreed to 'establish an Eminent persons Group (EPG)', to provide intellectual resources towards the establishment of the ASEAN Charter. At the 12th ASEAN summit in January 2007, The EPG Report was presented to ASEAN Heads. This report became the basis for the ASEAN Charter. At this summit, ASEAN Heads signed 'the Cebu declaration on the Blueprint of the ASEAN Charter' to endorse the EPG Report and they directed a high level task force set up to complete the drafting of the ASEAN Charter in time for the 13th summit in Singapore in 2007.

Obviously, the Charter is not the founding document of the ASEAN, yet it enjoys supremacy over those prior binding instruments. The original member nations are Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines, but all current 10 member states have ratified the Charter, pursuant to each jurisdiction's statutory or constitutional procedure. It can certainly be considered as the new legal and international framework for ASEAN. Art. 52(1) of the Charter cannot be any clearer about its textual pedigree: 'All treaties, convention agreements, concords, declarations, protocols, and other ASEANS instruments which have been in effect (since) before the entry force of this Charter shall continue to be valid'.

-The objectives of ASEAN include: The maintenance and enhancement of peace, security and stability in the region, to maintain a nuclear weapons' free zone and prevent the use of Weapons of Mass Destruction(WMD) in the zone, the promotion of constitutionalism in the region, the promotion of regional integration and cooperation in the political, economic and socio-cultural sectors. It also seeks to create a single market for trade and investment and facilitate free movement of labour, capital and professionals within member states. Environmental concerns, and most importantly, the improvement of the lives of the people of the member states in the area of education, social welfare and justice, capacity building and empowerment initiatives are also key objectives of the ASEAN.¹²

-Principles of ASEAN: As contained in the Charter, it emphasizes non-interference in the internal affairs of member states. This is gleaned in about five of the twelve sub-sections of the provisions on principles in the Charter.¹³

2.2 THE ORGANS OF THE ASEAN

2.2.1. The Asean Summit: It is the supreme policy making body of ASEAN. It comprises of Heads of state or government of member states. It appoints the secretary-general of ASEAN. Its meeting is held twice annually, and is hosted by the member state holding the ASEAN Chairmanship. There is also ad hoc or special meetings convened when necessary at agreed venues by member states and chaired by the country with the chairmanship. The summit deliberates and provides policy guidance and takes decisions bordering on critical issues affecting the region and also addresses emergency situations affecting ASEAN.¹⁴

¹¹ K Shimizu, 'The ASEAN Charter and the ASEAN Economic Community', Economic Journal of Hokkaido university. Vol. 40 (2011) pp 73-87.

¹² Article I, Charter of the ASEAN, <https://www.aseansec.org/21069.pdf>. Accessed 5 October, 2019.

¹³ Art. 2 (a), (e), (f), (k) (m) of the Charter(*ibid*)

¹⁴ Art. 7 of the Charter

2.2.2 ASEAN COORDINATING COUNCIL: It comprises the ASEAN foreign Ministers and they meet at least twice a year. The coordinating council prepares the agenda for the ASEAN Summit and also coordinates the implementation of agreements and decisions of the ASEAN summit. It considers the annual report of the Secretary General on the work of ASEAN. It approves the appointment and termination of the Deputy Secretaries-General upon the recommendation of the Secretary-General and also coordinates with the ASEAN community councils to enhance policy coherence, efficiency and cooperation in ASEAN.¹⁵

2.2.3 ASEAN COMMUNITY COUNCILS: This comprises of the ASEAN Political-Security Community Council, ASEAN Economic Community Council, and ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Council. These are the three(3) pillars of ASEAN. Each member state has its national designation in each Community Council meeting. The Community Councils ensures the implementation of projects and submits reports and recommendations of the 3 pillars of the ASEAN community to the ASEAN Summit. They meet at least twice a year.¹⁶

2.2.4. ASEAN SECTORAL MINISTERIAL BODIES: It comprises of various Ministers and senior government officials of ASEAN member states meeting as directed by the Secretary General to strengthen cooperation in their respective fields in support of ASEAN integrations and community building and they submit reports and recommendations to their respective community councils.¹⁷

2.2.5. THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND ASEAN SECRETARIAT: The Secretary-General holds office for a non-renewable term of 5 years, selected from among nationals of the ASEAN member states based on alphabetical rotation, with due consideration to integrity, capability and professional experience, and gender equality. The Secretary-General is the engine room of the organisation and carries out such duties and responsibilities in accordance with the provisions, practices, protocols and relevant instruments of the ASEAN. The Secretary-General participates in all the meetings of ASEAN. He/she facilitates and monitors progress in the implementation of ASEAN agreement and the decisions, and submits an annual report on the work of ASEAN to the ASEAN summit. He is the Chief Administrative Officer of ASEAN and is assisted by four Deputy Secretaries-General who are of the rank of Deputy Ministers in the member states. The deputies shall hold office for a term of 3 years, 2 of them (Deputies) will be non-renewable and based on alphabetical rotation, while the other two (2) are non-renewable and are openly recruited based on merit.¹⁸

2.2.6. Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN: They are ambassadors from member states to ASEAN, and are based in Jakarta. They coordinate with the National Secretariats and other Sectoral Ministerial bodies to advance the course of ASEAN. They facilitate ASEAN cooperation with external partners.¹⁹

2.2.7. The National Secretariats: Each member state has an ASEAN national secretariat to serve as a national focal point to coordinate and support, and promote ASEAN vision, identity, programmes and awareness at the national level.²⁰ Other entities and bodies of ASEAN which are no less important are also provided for in the Charter, some of them are: ASEAN Human Rights body, ASEAN Foundation, ASEAN AGENCIES, *et cetera*.

III. ACHIEVEMENTS OF ASEAN

3.1 Improvement in the Standard of Living of the people of ASEAN

In 2017, 82.7 % of ASEAN Population had access to safe drinking water. ASEAN population reached 642. 1 million in 2017, which was about 8.5% of world's population in 2017.²¹ Over 76.2% of ASEAN population had access to improved sanitation. Under 26 per 1, 000 live-births, while life expectancy at birth in 2017 was 72 years.

Adult literacy in ASEAN in 2016 was 95% while the unemployment rate was 4.1% in 2016. Those living below poverty line of 1.099 USD was 6.9% (except Brunei and Singapore). The DP was 3.3.% and 3.5% of world GDP in 2013 and 2017 respectively. The volume of ASEAN Trade in goods within members states was 590.4 billion us Dollars, with China, - 441.6, Japan – 219.0, India 73.6 and Republic of Korea – 153.0, while trade by ASEAN with the rest of the world stood at 532.1 (all in Billions of US Dollars). This is an

¹⁵ Art. 8 of the Charter

¹⁶ Art. 9 of the Charter

¹⁷ See Art 10 and ANNEX 1 of the Charter.

¹⁸ Art. 11 of the ASEAN Charter.

¹⁹ Art. 12(*ibid*)

²⁰ Art. 13(*ibid*)

²¹ ASEAN SIGNAPORE 2018 – Innovation in statistics collection, completion, Data requirement of the ASEAN community – ASEAN statistical Highlights 2018. <<https://www.asian.org:ASEAN-statistical-highlights-Singapore2018>>

indication that there was more trade within the ASEAN nations, other nations of ASIAN region compared to the rest of the countries of the world. This by necessary implication signifies that the economic integration policies of ASEAN is working.

The net FDI by ASEAN shows a total of 137, 0006.2 million dollars covering all sectors

3.2. Food Sufficiency:

To underscore the importance of food sufficiency in economic growth and development of any nation, ASEAN has put together a couple of programmes and implemented them judiciously. In 1979, it signed the Agreement on ASEAN Food Security Reserve (ASFRB), under the Agreement, each member state established an ASEAN Emergency Rice Reserve (AERR), a sum total of the basic food stock (rice) maintained by each member country within its national border. As at 2017, the total ear marked quantity for the AERR stood at 87,000 metric tonnes and it can only go higher.²² The Asean has developed the ASEAN Food Safety Initiative to provide useful information on food safety such as SPS measures of various countries.²³ The Asean food Agricultural Practices (ASEAN.CAP) for fresh fruits and vegetables has been developed and adopted as a standard for the production, harvesting and handling of fruits and vegetables in the region. Pesticides regulations, use and control is also important here and it is co-ordinated in Malaysia.²⁴

3.3 Economic Integration

On goods, as at 2018, virtually all of intra-ASEAN tariffs (98.6%) has been eliminated, while ASEAN intensifies efforts to advance its trade facilitation work.²⁵

-The ASEAN single window (ASW) has been in operation in 5 member states – Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam, since, Jan, 2018. Preferential tariff duty can now be granted through the exchange of electronic data (e-ATIAGA FORM D) and received electronically through the ASW gateway. Efforts to expand the coverage of ASW is under way.²⁶

3.3 Decision Making Process:

One of the remarkable aspects of ASEAN is the decision making process based on consultation and consensus, compared to the EU. Consensus here is not to be confused with unanimity which was one of the flaws of the early international organizations. Consensus does not agree with total agreement, but it represents a commitment to finding a way of moving forward by establishing what seems to have a broad support.²⁷ Thus consensus building in the ASEAN Way is an attempt to create a common understanding of the problem without necessarily producing a common approach to problem – solving. It is about agreeing to disagree rather than allowing agreements to becloud and undermine the spirit of regionalism.

3.4 Mobility Of Persons, Goods And Services:

Movements of people within ASEAN nations have significantly increased since its inception. Malaysia had 3 Million estimated migrant workers from Indonesia, Philippines and Myanmar. Singapore frequently relies on professionals from Malaysia and from Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam²⁸.

IV. FAILURES

- Over the years, much of the criticism levelled at ASEAN has been over its principles of consensus and of non-interference with the internal affairs of member states. Just like the AU, the ASEAN are often referred to as “the club of Heads of states”, because member countries refuse to criticize each other in the face of very

²² ASEAN Major Achievements, <https://www.asean.org/?static_post_major_achievements>. Accessed 10 October 2019.

²³ ASEAN FOOD INITIATIVE, <<https://www.aseanfood.safety.network.net>> Accessed 10 October 2019.

²⁴ See the website for pesticide regulation– ASEAN Pest, Livestock and Biotechnology initiatives, <http://www.agro.link.moa.my/doi/ASEAN_Pest>. Accessed 4 October 2019

²⁵ Yu Oianlang and Z Shibo, Interview of the ASEAN Secretary-General - Lim Jock Ho, ahead of the 33rd summit of ASEAN on Nov 11 – 15, 2018. Xinhua News of 11-11-2018.

²⁶ *ibid*

²⁷ F. Ahmed and Others, “Success and Failures of ASEAN as a Regional Organisation” Department of political Science. Kuliyyah of Islamic Revealed knowledge and Human sciences, International Islamic University, Malaysia. https://www.Academia.edu/38362146_success_and_failure_of_ASEAN_pdf. Accessed 8 October 2019.

²⁸ Regional Agenda: ASEAN World Economic Forum, <https://www.Weforum.org/agenda/2017/ASEAN30_years_achievement> Accessed 8 October 2019.

damning constitutional breaches, therefore the principle non-interference is an Albatross on the proper functioning of ASEAN.

- Lack of uniform constitutionalism: Most of the countries parade a range of diverse political systems, from the absolute monarchy of Brunei, to a military regime transitioning to civilian rule in Myanmar. From a republic in Indonesia, Singapore, Philippines to constitutional monarchs in Cambodia, Malaysia, and Thailand, to communist rule in Laos and Vietnam,²⁹ unlike the EU where every member country is an established, hence easier to push uniform reforms and policies.

- The Human rights record; It is appealing that 52 years down the line, the human rights records in ASEAN member states has not significantly reduced. For instance, the Martial law in Thailand and the despotic regime of Duterte in Philippines have very poor human rights records. Lack of free press and freedom of expression is part of the issue with most ASEAN member states.

- Environmental concerns: Impact mitigation and adaptation of climate change in food, Agriculture, sanitary and phyto-sanitary (sps) measures that deal with human health and animal/ plant health/diseases have emerged. For example the risks associated with GMOs and other public health issue like cancer pathogens in pesticides, *et cetera*, have not been sufficiently addressed by ASEAN.

- The Rohingya Refugee crisis in Myanmar, has drawn particular attention to the failure of ASEAN to be responsive to sensitive situations. ASEAN refuses to suspend Myanmar despite global outrage triggered by humanitarian concerns in Myanmar.

- On Economic Integration; The establishment of the Asian Economic Community (AEC) in 2015 was viewed as the first(1st) step in addressing this major goal but it still lacks a common regulatory framework, ultimately preventing ASEAN from becoming a major player in global trade. Diversity in economic development in member states is the main issue. While Singapore and Brunei have high GDP's per capita, others such as Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar have far lower level of prosperity.³⁰

- The Economic policies of member states, for instance, Indonesia believes on Economic protectionism, therefore cut in tariff barriers might not be achieved since there is no referendum or other public policy in member states to adopt the policy. There is no parliament in ASEAN, so there is no guarantee that member nations of ASEAN will imbibe the economic policies of the organisation.

- Ethnic, political, cultural, religious and linguistic diversities among ASEAN states: In the EU, new member states must have stable institutions guaranteeing democracies with market economics but ASEAN member states range from authoritarian, to socialist/communist, to fully democratic countries.³¹

- Lack of a dispute settlement body to address issues of security, human rights and good governance, there exists no outlet to impose penalties for failure to follow through on agreements, declarations or deals. This is a major drawback of ASEAN.

- ASEAN remains a forum of policy – makers and bureaucrats and the people of the member countries are kept aloof and are not integrated in the decision making process of ASEAN. It is not people centred, but focuses on the structures only.

V. PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE.

- There is need for massive infrastructural investment; To make meaningful impact in the global context, ASEAN must engineer an infrastructural renaissance in member states. According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), ASEAN'S infrastructure need is expected to be 60 billion US Dollars a year, from 2010 – 2020.³²

- Although ASEAN had attempted to address the human Rights issue by forming ASEAN Inter governmental commission on Human Rights in 2009, and in 2012, drafted the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, the declaration was strongly criticized by international observers and ASEAN Civil society. It was described by the Human Rights Watch(HRW) as “declaration of government powers disguised as a declaration of human rights”. There is therefore the need for consultation with relevant stakeholders to formulate a framework for Human rights intervention in the ASEAN.

- The ASEAN good governance regulations and regulatory practices is already in operation, therefore its core principles should be implemented to the letter.

²⁹ M Angeles and M Yusingco, “ASEAN Charter: Deepening Constitutionalism in South East Asia”, ASIAN CURRENTS, a publication of the Asia Studies Association of Australia, September, 2017.

³⁰ I Mules, “ASEAN 50 years on: Success or Failure”?DW-Made for Minds<<http://www.dw.com/en/asean-50-years=on-success-or-failure/a-38043777>, 29-04-2017>. Accessed 4 October,2019

³¹ Regional Agenda, Weforum(n 25)

³² *ibid*

VI. ASIA PACIFIC ECONOMIC FORUM(APEC).

This is an economic group of 21 members, formed in 1989, with the primary goal of promoting free trade and sustainable development in the Pacific-rim economies. Its creation was a response to the increasing interdependence of Asia – Pacific Economies. The founding members of APEC were Australia, Brunei, Canada, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and the United States of America. Since its launch, China, Peru, Russia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Mexico, Papua New Guinea, Chile and Vietnam have joined its ranks. APEC refers to its members as economic rather than states due to the disputed status of Taiwan and Hong Kong. Decisions are taken by consensus while some decisions are in the absence of unanimity, they are not legally binding by the member economies. Official observers of APEC include the ASEAN, the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF).³³ It is headquartered in Singapore.

6.1 Institutional Evolution and organs of APEC;

Initially APEC was designed as a consultative forum to discuss the region's economic development on *ad hoc* basis, however APEC made steady progress to become an institutionalised Structure;³⁴

-The adoption of the Seoul Declaration in 1991 was the first step to institutionalise APEC, it was achieved in a non-treaty form but legally binding and clothes APEC with a legal personality.³⁵

-The next significant step was the agreement to establish the permanent secretariat during the 4th APEC Ministerial meeting at Bangkok in 1992, the EPG was also established.

-The Seattle Meeting in 1993 emphasised putting the Organs of APEC into operation, the Committee on Trade and Investment (CTI) and The Pacific Business Forum were also established.

-The 1995 ACTION AGENDA adopted at Osaka prescribed guidelines which allowed APEC members to reach their target through a unique mechanism called- Concerted Unilateral Approach (CUA).

6.1.1 APEC's Organs; There is some sort of dichotomy between the Asian members and others led by the US over the need to formally institutionalise APEC, hence its slow progress in that direction. Here are some of the functional organs of APEC;

* The Ministerial Meeting- This is formally, the highest decision making body

* The Economic Leaders' Meeting- Though it is informal, but it is the ultimate authority to decide the direction of APEC in recent years.³⁶

* The Secretariat; It is constituted as a legal entity to act on behalf of APEC members, however there is an inclination by members that the Secretariat should be small in size, simple in structure, but effective.³⁷

6.2 SUCCESSES OF APEC

- APEC has grown to become a dynamic engine of growth and one of the most important regional forums in the Asia-Pacific. Its 21 member economies are home to around 2.8 million people and accounted for, approximately 59% of world GDP and 49% of world trade in 2015.³⁸ As a result of APEC's work, growth has soared in the region, with real GDP increasing from USD 19 trillion in 1989 to USD 42 trillion in 2015, meanwhile residents of the ASIA – PACIFIC witnessed their per capita income rise by 74%, lifting millions out of poverty and creating a growing middle class in just over 2 decades.

- Ease of doing business: APEC launched its ease of doing business action plan in 2009, with the goal of making it cheaper, easier and faster to do business in the region. Between 2009 and 2013, member economies improved the ease of doing business in the Asia-Pacific by 11.3% across all areas of the initiative, including; starting a business, getting credit or applying for permits. For example, APEC has expedited the time it takes for a company to build a new factory or office building. Today, construction permits are issued at a faster pace, dropping 18.7% from 169 days to 134 days in 4 years with APEC topping the charts globally for the shortest

³³ Hansard of the Parliament of Australia, Asia Pacific Economic Forum: From idea to 2020 Vision, Chapter 2(1999-2002).

³⁴ A Hirano, *Legal Aspects of the Institutionalisation of APEC*, Working paper series 95/96 No.6 IDE-APEC STUDY CENTER. Research for International Issues. Fuji Research Institute Corporation.

³⁵ Paragraph 7 and 8 of the Joint statement of the Ministerial Meeting at the Seoul Declaration in 1991.

³⁶ For instance, the joint Statement of the Ministerial Meeting in 1995 stated "Ministers agreed to propose the draft Action Agenda to the Economic Leaders for their consideration and adoption". This indicates that the Leader's meeting has a higher position than the Ministerial Meeting

³⁷ Article A-1-b and Article 4 of the Bangkok Declaration on APEC Institutional Arrangements in 1992

³⁸ About Apec, A publication of APEC Secretariat.< <https://c/users/hp/Documents/AboutAPEC.html>>.Accessed 8 October 2019.

permit time. Starting a company in the Asia – pacific is also simpler with the number of procedures falling by 20.2% since 2009.³⁹

- APEC Business Travel Card: By making it simpler for business people to travel, APEC is enabling them to conduct their business, trade and investment more easily. Over 160,000 travellers use the APEC business travel card which provides pre-approved frequent business travellers with visa clearance and fast – track entry through special APEC lanes at major International Airports in the region. 19 APEC members fully participate in the scheme with United States of America and Canada as transitional members.

- Connecting the Regions: APEC is working to connect the region through improved infrastructure linkages, people mobility and institutional ties across the region. APEC’s connectivity Blueprint maps out initiatives, from; improving information technology and transportation infrastructure to making it easier for students, business people and tourists to travel around the region.

- APEC Supply Chain Connectivity: APEC is also improving logistics and transport networks to enable component parts and final goods to travel across multiple borders, contributing to a more efficient regional supply chain. To improve efficiency, APEC is addressing ‘8 choker points’; from regulatory impediments to customs procedures and infrastructure bottlenecks with the goal of an APEC – wide 10% improvement in supply chain performance in terms of time, cost and uncertainty. Between 2009 – 2013, the lead time to import goods dropped by an average 25% while lead time to export fell by 21% in the region.⁴⁰

- Faster Customs Procedures: At the borders, APEC, economies have implemented the centralization of export – import processes online, accelerating time it takes for goods to travel across borders, known widely as the Single Window. This virtual system links all government agencies involved in the export – import process, allowing companies to submit documents electronically one time from anywhere. Gone are the myriad forms, long queues, and visits to multiple agencies, while goods spoil in the Warehouses. Since the APEC sub-committee on customs and procedure (SCCP) launched the single windows initiative in 2001, APEC capacity building workshops have provided training on software coding or legal issues to help APEC members implement their own Single Windows Systems (SWS). By 2013, 14 APEC economies had adopted various stages of the SWS, with the goal of all 21 members being on board by 2020.

- Gender Issues: APEC members recognise that the entire potential of women’s participation in the Asia – Pacific economy is abysmally low. As a result, the economic empowerment of women and their inclusion are essential agenda items.

- Intellectual Property Rights: In 1996, APECs committee on Trade and Investment (STI) established an intellectual property (I.P.) Rights Get – Together (IPR - GT). This initiative aims to ensure, through legislation, the adequate protection of IPR in the region.

- Emergency Preparedness: Most APEC countries lie along the Pacific ring of fire, where strong tsunamis, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions present constant threats. The region is also vulnerable to tropical cyclone formations, hence the APEC has set up a network of emergency response mechanism to tackle any humanitarian disaster in the region.

6.3 Failures of APEC

-APEC has not been able to manage expectations or mould expectations. Their ambition has overtaken their ability.⁴¹

-APEC has been criticised as a political ‘Talk-Fest’. There is a deep gulf between words and actions.

- Protectionism as evidenced in the trade wars between US and China.

- There was no direct intervention in the late 1990s financial Crises that hit the Asian Countries.

- APEC as a multicultural organisation should have been in the fore front of the international response to economic crises.

- Lack of commitment of member states to implement policies of APEC, for instance Japan refused to commit to the Early Voluntary Sectoral Liberalisation (EVSL) Initiative.

6.4 PROSPECTS OF APEC

- The APEC Charter: The United State of America has proposed that APEC adopt the Shanghai Charter at its October 10-13 summit, this year, to enhance the region’s commitment to freeing up trade and investment in the region.⁴²

³⁹ *ibid*

⁴⁰ APEC Policy Support Unit Assessment – 2009 - 2013

⁴¹ The Economist, Comments by the New Zealand Prime Minister-Jenny Shipley at the Kuala Lumpur Ministerial meeting(1998). Retrieved from @APEC Secretariat on Twitter.13 October, 2019

- There have also been calls to consider adding new themes to the 1995 Osaka Action Agenda, which provides a road map for free and open trade and investment, business facilitation, and economic and technical cooperation.
- Monitoring of the implementation of individual action plans of member countries should be improved. This could be done in like manner as the OECD.
- Cooperation on the information – driven new economy should be strengthened within and between member economies. This is the new trend globally and APEC countries must key in to the new world.
- The legal systems of member economies should be more transparent and laws should be unified on several areas for ease of commerce and trade.

VII. THE SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION (SAARC)

- The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation was established with the signing of the SAARC Charter in Dhaka on 8 December 1985. Bangladesh was the primary catalyst of the idea, which was met with trepidation by India and Pakistan. SAARC comprises of 8 members states: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The Secretariat of SAARC was set up in Kathmandu on 17 January, 1987.

7.1 The objectives of the Association as outlined in the Charter are: to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life, to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region and to provide all individuals the opportunity to live in dignity and to realise their full potentials; to promote and strength collective self reliance and mutual trust, strengthen cooperation among themselves and with other developing countries and with other Regional and International Organizations with similar aims and objectives.⁴³

Decisions at all levels are taken on the basis of unanimity; and bilateral and contentious issues are excluded from the deliberations of the Association. It is a geopolitical union, and has a combined area of nearly 2 million miles, making up a total of 3% of the world’s total area and with over 1.7billion people, it is about 21% of the world’s total population.⁴⁴ There are also several countries with observer status like; Australia, China, Iran, EU, Japan, Mauritius, Myanmar, South Korea and the United States of America. Russia and Turkey have also applied to become observers, while South Africa has previously participated in SAARC meetings.

7.2 Organs of SAARC

Meetings of Heads of States or Government. They meet once a year or more often as necessity demands.⁴⁵

Council of Ministers: They comprise of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of member states and their functions include; reviewing and formulation of the policies of the Association, they also take decisions on new area of cooperation.⁴⁶

Standing Committees: It comprises the foreign secretaries of member states and their functions include; mobilisation of regional and external resources, determining of inter-sectoral priorities, approval of projects and programmes, and the modalities of their financing. There are also Action Committees and a Secretariat.

The secretary General is appointed by the Council of Ministers from member countries in Alphabetical order for a 3 year term.

7.3 Achievements Of Saarc

- The Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs matters, establishment of SAARC Arbitration council, and the limited agreement on avoidance of Double Taxation and Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax matters is a major leap in unifying and humanizing of the legal regimes in these areas for ease doing businesses in member nations. This was signal doing the 13th SAARC Summit.⁴⁷

- SAARC facilitated the adoption of the Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism (including Additional Protocol on signed in June, 2004 in Islamabad), Narcortic Drugs and psychotropic substances,

⁴² U Shingzu(ed), The Japan Times, <<https://www.japan-times.co.jp/news/200/06/04>>. Accessed 8 October 2019

⁴³ About SAARC, <<https://www.saarc-sec.org/about-saarc>>. Accessed 8 October, 2019

⁴⁴ Saarc Countries, <<https://www.worldpopulationreview.com/countries/saarc-countries>> (2019 – 08-28). Accessed 8 October, 2019

⁴⁵ Art III of the Charter(n 34)

⁴⁶ Art. IV of the Charter(n34)

⁴⁷ M. Aftab, “Can SAFTA Lead to South Asia Economic Union”, The News, January, 2004.

Trafficking in Women and Children and Child Welfare. This has helped to tame the tide of terrorism in the region.

- Educational initiatives; In the field of education, the member states co-operate through the forums of SACODIL (SAARC Consortium on Open and Distance Learning) and Heads of Universities grants. Equivalent bodies and Commissions also offer Scholarship to citizens of member Countries.

- MOUs have been signed to promote collaboration with UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), UNICEF, UNESCAP, UN Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), WHO, APT, EU, UNIFEM (UN Fund for Women), World Bank *et cetera* to carry out programmes and interventions in health care, woman's rights, drug control *et cetera*.

- Diffusion of tension in the region: Informal talks between member states (For example, the Indian and Pakistani Prime Ministers) at the 2nd SAARC summit at Bangalore in November 1986 led to the de-escalation of tensions between the two (2) countries on the issue of India's military exercises on the borders of Pakistan, the India – Sri Lanka talks at the 1989 SAARC foreign Ministers' meeting led to their accord on the Tamil Problem.

7.4 Failures of SAARC.

- High levels of illiteracy, poverty and unemployment; the standard of living in SAARC states is still very low.

- SAARC came into being to promote intraregional connectivity through trade but intra – SAARC trade stands at a meagre 5%.⁴⁸ SAFTA has not increased trade. The region is home to 400 million poor people, more than 30% of the region's population live below the poverty line. All the SAARC countries have a low ranking HDI Index, forcing Sri Lanka (73), Maldives (104), India (130), Bhutan (132) Pakistan (147), Bangladesh (142) and Nepal (145). The HDI ranking is based on achievements in terms of life expectancy, education and real income.⁴⁹

- Internal threats; India is the largest member of SAARC in size and population and has been hegemonic in its approach to issues. For example, the postponement of the Islamabad SAARC conference through Indian Machinations is an example of how SAARC has paid the price for Indian's ambitions.

- Traditional enmity in the region – India – Maldives, India – Nepal, India –Sri Lanka (The Tamil Tigers' issue), India – Bangladesh (Ganges water issue).

The issue of enmity between Pakistan and India, the two largest States of SAARC; India and Pakistan have been in legendary feud over the Kashmir region. This has become a great obstacle in its path to progress as complications arising from Indo-Pak tensions tend to have a negative impact on the organisation. Other issues like sir creek and Indo-Pak mistrust often hamper efforts for greater regional integration.⁵⁰

- Lack of platform for conflict resolution has become the greatest weakness of Saarc. Member states do not have channels to seek redress for disputes arising amongst themselves. As President Musharaf of Pakistan said, "SAARC" must expand its Charter to discuss bilateral issues at the regional level. There can be no development in the absence of peace. There can be no peace, so long as political issues and disputes continue to fester".⁵¹

- Lack of Connectivity; Infrastructure deficit leads to reduced connectivity among the SAARC nations. Women, the poor and marginalized social groups are particularly affected by the region's infrastructure gap.⁵²

- Insecurity of the region; The region is viewed as the hub of terrorism, especially with the fact that Osama Bin Laden was discovered and killed in Pakistan. The issue of terrorism financing has led to counter accusations by member states and the consequence is Mutual distrust by member nations.

- Small size of market, lack of industrial basis, traditional concentration on producing consumer goods, weak infrastructure, socio-economic problems, has led to the failure of SAARC to be a regional trading bloc.

7.5 Prospects of SAARC:

⁴⁸ J Falak, "Implacable Failures of the Saarc" <[https://www.cscr.pk/explore/themes/politics – governance/implacable-failures-of-the-saarc](https://www.cscr.pk/explore/themes/politics-governance/implacable-failures-of-the-saarc)> Centre for Strategies and Contemporary Research June, 21, 2017. Accessed 8 October, 2019

⁴⁹ HDI Report, 2016

⁵⁰ A khi, "Impediments to the Success of Saarc" A Research Journal of South Asian Studies. Vol. 30, No.1 Jan- June 2015., PP 291–302.. Government College University, Lahore.

⁵¹ M. Aftab, (n45)

⁵² J Falak, "Implacable Failures of the Saarc" <[https://www.cscr.pk/explore/themes/politics – governance/implacable-failures-of-the-saarc](https://www.cscr.pk/explore/themes/politics-governance/implacable-failures-of-the-saarc)> Centre for Strategies and Contemporary Research June, 21, 2017. Accessed 8 October, 2019

SAARC countries have vast potentials. It is a huge market of about 1.7 billion people, has a considerable and fast growing middle class, thanks to sustained above average economic growth over many years, substantial reserves of natural resources, large coastline and geographical proximity with some of the biggest economies of the globe. World powers are showing increasing interest in this region. There are proposals for reviving the ancient Silk Route and establishing a modern maritime Silk Road connectivity. These will promote the concept of blue economy and SAARC has good prospects given its access to the blue water. Increasing efforts are being directed at linking the region with other parts of Asia. Through Central Asia, there is also possibility of linking with Europe. In this globalised world, where all nations are seeking avenues

to improve relations and cooperation for ensuring greater development, SAARC should not remain a pessimistic exception. SAARC should take lessons from the past, look deep and learn from the experiences of AESEAN and the EU, they could look to move forward faster in furthering regional cooperation in South Asia for the benefit of the people.⁵³

VIII. THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES (CIS)

The CIS was established by an Agreement signed by Russia, Belarus and Ukraine in Minsk on 8 December 1991, to which eight (8) other former Republics of the USSR (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) adhered to at Alma Ata on 21 December that year. Georgia joined in 1993 so that the organisation now comprises of all the former Soviet Republics apart from the three (3) Baltic States. The organisation is based on respect for the territorial integrity of member states and member states agreed to maintain and retain under joint command, a common military and strategic space, including joint control over nuclear weapons.⁵⁴ The CIS adopted a charter in Minsk in January. 1993.

8.1 Under the Charter, the Purposes of the CIS shall be;

- The realisation of cooperation in political, economic, environmental, cultural, humanitarian and other spheres; universal and balanced economic and social development of member states under the framework of common economic space, Interstate cooperation and integration, human rights and fundamental liberties. Cooperation between member states to ensure international peace and security, disarmament and reduction in military expenditure, the elimination of nuclear and other types of Weapons of Mass Destruction(WMD), and the achievement of universal and full disarmament, free movement and free interaction of citizens of member states *etcetera*.⁵⁵ The CIS is expressed to be based on the sovereign equality of its members who are independent subjects of international law. Decisions are taken by general consent – consensus.

8.2 Organs of the CIS;

8.2.1. Bodies of Commonwealth Council of Heads of States and Council of Heads of Government: This is the supreme body of the Commonwealth, in which all members are represented at the highest level. They discuss and decide fundamental questions connected with the activity of member states. They meet twice a year, however extraordinary sessions may be necessary at the instance of a member state.⁵⁶

8.2.2 The Council of Heads of Government: They are required to coordinate the cooperation of bodies of executive authority of member states in economic social and other spheres of interest. They meet 4 times per year.⁵⁷

8.2.3. Council of Ministers of foreign Affairs: They carry the condition of foreign policy activity of member states.⁵⁸

8.2.4. Coordinating-Consultative Committee: It is a permanently functioning executive and coordinating body of the C.I.S. It drafts and submits proposals on questions concerning cooperation under the framework of the C.I.S, developing Socio-economic ties, facilitates the realisation of agreements pursuant to specific directions of economic relations. It organises conferences of representatives and experts for the preparation of draft documents to be submitted to sessions of the council of Heads of State and governments. They comprise of permanent authorised representatives, two (2) from each member state of the CIS and the coordinator of the committee appointed by council of the committee.

⁵³ M Ahmad, “SAARC at 30: Achievements, Potentials, and Challenges”, Proceeding of SAARC Seminar organized by the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies(BIIS), Dhaka, December,8 2015

⁵⁴ M Shaw, *International Law*, 7th edn, Cambridge University Press, UK, 2014. pp 935-936

⁵⁵ Art. 2 of the Charter, <[https://www.dipublic.org/100617charter – establishment-the-C-I-S-Cis](https://www.dipublic.org/100617charter-establishment-the-C-I-S-Cis)>. Accessed 5 October,2019.

⁵⁶ Art. 21(*ibid*)

⁵⁷ Art. 22

⁵⁸ Art.27

8.2.5. Council of Ministers of Defence, (Chief of Command of United Armed Forces: They are supposed to carry out military policies of the CIS and building the military of member states. The Chief of Command of the United Armed Forces is in charge of the leadership of the Armed forces of the CIS. It carries out its mandate in live with the decisions of the council of Heads of states and the United Nations.⁵⁹

8.2.6. The Economic Court: The mandate of the Economic Court includes dispute resolution arising during the implementation of Economic obligations and other disputes. It also has a mandate to interpret provisions of agreements and other acts of the CIS for economic issues. It is located in Minsk.

8.2.7. Commission for Human Rights: It consists of representatives of member states and shall be a consultative body of the CIS and has a mandate to observe the fulfilment of human rights obligations undertaken by member state under the framework of the CIS.⁶⁰

7.2.8. Other Organs of the CIS include; Bodies of inter-Sectoral Cooperation (Art. 34): Their duty is to facilitated the implementation of agreed principles of the CIS, The council of permanent representatives. (CPR) has similar duties to council of foreign ministers, The Council of Border Guard commanders is devoted to external border protection. The Economic council manages problems of regional Economic integration such as common market, customs and Agric markets. There are over 70 Industrial councils of varying efficiency, which adopt recommendations on the basis of 2/3 majority or a simple majority and whose decisions do not bind states who reject them. The Inter parliamentary Assembly comprise of parliamentary delegations of the states, created in 1995, they discuss problems of Parliamentary Cooperation and develop proposals by the Parliaments of the CIS states.

8.3 Successes of the CIS

- The successes and achievements of the CIS has been measured as it is seen largely as a dysfunctional international organisation, rising from the ashes of a civilised divorce from the USSR, hence the minimal success is seen perhaps in the light of its ability to amicably handle the issues of dividing the external debt and property (heritage of the USSR) and distributing quotas on tanks according to the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE) in 1990. This was led by Russia.

- The signing of the collective security treaty (CST) is another positive index of CIS, although it has been largely ineffective, however peace keeping operations by Russia took place in Tajikistan (1992 - 1997) and Abkhazia (since 1994 - 2012). An Anti – terrorist centre was set up and joint Military exercises held between 2002 – 2004. The status of the CST was upgraded to the collective security Treaty Organisation.

- The Free Trade Zone, a customs union was signed between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan in 1999 and it was expanded to a free Trade Zone which included also Kyrgyzstan. The cooperation to remove most of the barriers of trade was launched in Moscow in 2003, convincing Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine in the quest for the establishment of the framework for a united Economic Space.⁶¹

8.4 Failures

- The initially proclaimed ambition to establish an economic union was undermined by the failure to retain the ruble as the common currency.

- In the 1st half of the 1990s, all post – soviet states were hit by severe economic crises, and none of them showed serious interest in trying to find a common way out. The financial melt down in 1998 worsened matters.

- Anti-democratic forms of governance: Most post – soviet regimes are known for backing away from the path of democratic reforms and developing various form of semi-authoritarianism.

- The orange revolution in Ukraine, the collapse of the regime of Askar Akaev in Kyrgyzstan in 2005 demonstrated that Russia had no reliable instruments for supporting its allies against internal challenges.

- Lack of commitment of member states to C.I.S; Turkmenistan and Ukraine, though ‘founding states’ has never been members as they did not ratify the charter. Georgia – withdrew its membership in 2009 as a result of Russo – Georgia war of 2008.

- The Annexation of Crimea by Russia and Russia’s involvement in the war in Donbass.

- Human Rights issues: The 2005 Andijan massacre in Uzbekistan shows there is zero improvement in human rights since the collapse of the USSR.

8.5 Prospects of CIS

⁵⁹ Art. 30

⁶⁰ Art.33 of the Charter.

⁶¹P Kubick, “Commonwealth of Independent States” *Encyclopaedia of Russian History* < <https://www.encyclopaedia.Conz.>> Oxford University Press. 6th edition. Accessed 8 October 2019.

Since the CIS was originally designed as just an instrument for a civilized divorce of states in the post – soviet space, the CIS survival appears to be its crowning achievement, however, 27 years after there is need for concrete steps to move the C.I.S. forward,

- In terms of conflicts and security challenges; frequent meetings between Vladimir Putin and other post-soviet state leaders should occur, to discuss informally and strengthen ties on all fronts.

- The Export of Russian Education and scientific discourse is of great importance; Due to Russia's lack of programmes such as the European Erasmus, there is much need for improvement. A platform for academic exchange, an electronic platform for admission into Russia Universities needs to be established, branches of Russian Universities should be opened in other countries and scholarships offered, especially for CIS citizens, just like China does in central Asia.⁶²

There is also the need to consolidate on the gains of the customs union set up by Russia Kazakhstan and Belarus in 2009.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

In the course of this paper, it has been established that most of the challenges and failures of Regional International Governmental Organisations operating in Asia are similar and numerous, hence the following recommendations have been put forward for a more effective realisation of their objectives;

- The need for Parliamentary Assemblies of the different Regional Organisations to instigate the passing of Model Laws,(for example in Education, Banking, Taxation, Commercial Law, Arbitration, Insolvency and Trust Concepts) to be implemented in national parliaments. This means the IGO legislate and pass laws, publish them and encourage member nations to align their national laws in that regard.⁶³

Regional organisations in Asia should prevent the likelihood of implementing facilitation programs for trade liberalization which are discriminatory for non-members. This paper recommends that ASIAN Regional IGOs should take a joint initiative in promoting multilateral liberalization with other IGOs and other supranational organisations like the EU. The world is a global village and linkages like that would open up the region to the world. Most Regional IGOs do promote policy discrimination against non-members. This unintentional discrimination was the popular criticism against the European single market of the EU.⁶⁴

To solve this problem of discriminatory trade policies, non-members should be invited to join the process of harmonising rules and standards. Also rules should be made which are consistent with international ones. Such rules could be that of the WTO, ILO *et cetera*.

There must be consistency in trade liberalization policies, for instance, the argument for the protection of infant industries in the developing economies, and also of agricultural based products is in contrast to the trade liberalization policies of most of the Regional IGOs because the protectionist Economies/countries will place import Tarrifs and other trade barriers on such goods.

Other Regional organisations in the region should take after the model of APEC as an Open Economic Association (OEA) which is an open organisation whose structures and policies do not lead to discrimination against trade and investment with the rest of the world. That is open Regionalism⁶⁵.

X. CONCLUSION

In the course of the paper it has been established that regional economic integration in a globalised world is not only important but a necessity for the prosperity of a region. Considering changing geopolitics in the world, if anyone is set to gain importance after EU, it is the sub-regional organisations in Asia. Regional connectivity is an important prerequisite to becoming a major player in the global arena. Better regional connectivity, untapped market segments and the population, if well harnessed, should be a major advantage in this endeavour.

⁶²A Gushchin, 'CIS in 2017; Achievements challenges, prospects' in N Mukhin and 1 sorokin (eds), "CIS and Integration: In search of Opportunities".. Russian International Affairs Council <<https://www.russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/cis-in-2017>.

⁶³ A Libman, "Commonwealth of Independent States and Eurasian Economic Community" in G Finizro, L Levi and N Vallinoto(eds), 'Community For International Democratic Watch', *First International Report 2011*, Centre For Studies on Federations. Accessed 12 November 2019

⁶⁴ I Yamazawa, "The Developing Economies" in APEC'S NEW DEVELOPMENT AND ITS IMPLICATON FOR NON-MEMBER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. XXXIV-2. JUNE 1996. Accessed 12 November 2019.

⁶⁵ *ibid*