

Establishing and Implementing MDGs for East Asia

By TAKITA Kenji

In Japan, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are not generally well known outside of a small group of specialists that includes researchers, diplomats, journalists and non-government organizations working on development issues. Yet the international community is focusing on the degree to which these goals are achieved, and nations bear some duty to act in pursuit of these goals as responsible stakeholders in global society. Among the most urgent issues highlighted in the Millennium Declaration adopted at the Millennium Summit in September 2000 were achieving the following goals by the year 2015: (1) to halve the proportion of the world's population that lives on less than a dollar a day; (2) to give basic education to all; (3) to achieve gender equality; (4) to reduce the mortality rate among children; (5) to improve the health of pregnant women; (6) to halt the spread of AIDS, malaria and other major epidemics; (7) to ensure the sustainability of the environment; and (8) to build a global development partnership.

As I have repeatedly stated in this and other forums, an East Asian Community has come to be defined as a host of regimes that cooperate on a pragmatic and humanitarian issues, but it should formulate, in parallel with these global-scale MDGs, its own goals that are particular to the East Asia region – while pursuing issues at the national level the region. Then it should also announce every five years the degree to which each country has achieved these goals. For example, these goals might include such things as ensuring education for all to an intermediate level rather than a basic level, halting the spread of AIDS and SARS, eradicating missiles, nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, making military spending transparent, protecting intellectual property rights, and reducing air and sea pollution. It is important to promote the idea of Japan as an “Asian Gateway,” but it should not be forgotten that a space for co-existence can only be built through improving the mutual scrutiny of these issues essential to human security.

(This is the English translation of an article written by Mr. TAKITA Kenji, Professor of Chuo University, which originally appeared on the BBS “Hyakka-Somei” of CEAC on September 7, 2007.)