

**The Network of East Asian Think-Tanks (NEAT) Working Group Report:
Overall Architecture of Community Building in East Asia
Held on April 24, 2005 in Tokyo, Japan
Final Report**

Introduction

The NEAT Working Group on Overall Architecture of Community Building in East Asia, sponsored by NEAT Japan, was held on April 24, 2005 in Tokyo, Japan. All 13 NEAT countries were invited to the Working Group meeting and a total of 22 participants from all 13 countries attended (A Concept Paper for the Working Group, Agenda and List of Participants are attached as Annex 1,2 and 3 respectively.) Following adoption of the Agenda, the Moderator's proposal to conduct the meeting in a manner conducive to free and full discussions was unanimously approved and most intensive and fruitful discussion took place with the active participation of all members.

Community Building has now emerged as a shared future agenda in East Asia. Since the formulation of ASEAN plus Japan, China and Korea (ASEAN+3) Summit in 1997, the ASEAN+3 has provided a common ground of deepening process of East Asian cooperation. There are presently no less than 48 meetings under 17 areas under the aegis of ASEAN+3 on the subjects such as finance, trade and investment, IT, development assistance, energy, health etc. These various levels of functional cooperation have played key roles for community building in East Asia.

East Asia is also a most promising center of economic and political dynamism in the world. Growing regional economic and socio-cultural interdependence *de facto* integration has brought about ever-increasing awareness of shared sense of community. East Asia has thus been provided a unique opportunity to design its architecture for future political, economic and socio-cultural interactions and exchanges. While a *de facto* community building is underway, we need to address clear visions, scopes and measures for the East Asian Community by designing the future architecture.

The East Asia Vision Group (EAVG) in 2001 has introduced and the East Asia Study Group (EASG) in 2002 has reiterated the spirit and principles for the community building in East Asia. Based on these two reports, with taking the recent progress into account, *the NEAT Working Group on Overall Architecture of Community Building in East Asia* endeavors to envision the concrete view on future goals, norms, and mechanisms for East Asian Community.

Guiding Principles for Community Building in East Asia

1. Peace, Prosperity and Progress

The goal of community building in East Asia should be the realization of the East Asian vision of cooperative 'Peace, Prosperity and Progress'. The East Asian Community must promote peace by building trust, confidence and ensuring the mutual security. The community should promote prosperity by increased interdependence of trade, investment and technologies. The community should also promote improved governance, strengthened basic human rights and advanced quality of life of people, in conformity with universally recognized values, including democracy and the rule of law, as well as global norms and systems. These visions should be built based on the evolutionary and building-block approaches.

2. Openness, Transparency and Comprehensiveness

East Asia should promote openness to enhance the interaction with other actors and regions. Transparency is also crucial for East Asia to be credible, reliable and accountable community. Comprehensive efforts in a broad array of in economic, socio-cultural, political and security fields must be employed. Community building should also invite comprehensive sectors of society – governments, private sectors, civil societies and the people to mobilize the creative energy.

3. Shared Regional Identity

A regional community cannot exist without a shared regional identity. Fostering feelings of empathy and identity should be encouraged by the members of the community to share problems, prospects and destinies of each other. Identity building belongs to the actors who can care for each other and prosper each other.

4. Equal Partnership with Shared Ownership

The East Asian Community must be based on the equal partnership. No member should dominate or pursue hegemony in the community but it must be managed democratically. The community also must be based on the shared ownership. All members should actively participate for the community building.

5. Flexible and Open Functional Cooperation

Promoting various areas of functional cooperation remains important driving force for the foundation of community building. In order to promote effective functional cooperation, actors who have the capability and the willingness should be encouraged to participate.

Architecture of Community Building in East Asia

1. The East Asian Community is non-exclusive, compatible and mutually complementary with global regimes, other regional frameworks and bilateral arrangements. The community should explore the possibility of enhanced interactions and linkages with other global/regional/bilateral frameworks.
2. East Asia should work together for more visible East Asian representation in international community, especially in the areas of UN organizations, IMF, World Bank etc., and also should pursue the partnership with the regional organization such as APEC, ARF, ASEM, FEALAC, Asia-Africa Conference and other Pacific cooperation.
3. The East Asian Community is a dynamic process of evolution. The community should continue enhancing intra-regional cooperation, promote the basic rights and welfare of people, and improve governance, in conformity with universally recognized values, including democracy and the rule of law, as well as global norms and systems. While ASEAN+3 is an important foundation of East Asian Community, the community is open for the fullest cooperation with other actors who share its vision and norms and become a partner of East Asia.
4. ASEAN has played a key role in promoting regional cooperation in East Asia. In particular, Bali Concord II with three communities (economic, security, and socio-cultural community) proposal will continue to propel region-wide efforts for community building.
5. Narrowing the development gap between the developed East Asian countries and developing countries such as Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV) is crucial for the community building. The Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) should be expanded to an Initiative for East Asian Integration (IEAI).
6. Northeast Asian cooperation among Japan, China and Korea is essential for the foundation of East Asian Community. Three countries should tighten Northeast Asian cooperation by further utilizing the current summit meeting on the occasion of the ASEAN+3 summit, and consider additional meetings to be regularized.
7. While ASEAN+3 Summit and other substantial cooperation based on ASEAN+3 continue to be major vehicles to promote community building, the East Asian Summit (EAS) should be utilized to have strategic dialogue among countries that play essential roles in East Asia.
8. Institution building is essential for promotion of community building. Among them, a strong and effective secretariat for East Asian cooperation is needed. The work of secretariat should be supported by the members of the East Asian community. It may be desirable to establish an East Asian Information Center for collecting, analyzing and disseminating the information regarding East Asian cooperation process.

Architecture to Promote Functional Cooperation in East Asia

1. As the functional cooperation is conducted in the areas of a wide-range of issues, the optimum modality of the cooperation differs from one issue to another. Nevertheless, 'openness', 'flexibility' and 'transparency' are key characteristics for effective functional cooperation in East Asia.
2. Constant review processes are necessary for each area of functional cooperation in order to promote information sharing and to avoid duplication with other frameworks. The strong and effective secretariat could serve to promote transparency that would lead to effective policy coordination and to avoid undesirable side-effect of functional cooperation.
3. East Asian countries should strengthen the networks of researchers and scholars through promoting Track-II activities to support official processes in East Asia. Engaging civil-societies and NGOs in various types of functional cooperation should also be encouraged.
4. East Asian Countries should strengthen educational, media and youth exchanges. The ASEAN University Network should be expanded to an East Asian University Network. Exchange programs of journalists and editors and youth in East Asia should be promoted.
5. Translations of academic and policy-oriented research works originally written in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and other Southeast Asian languages into English should be promoted.

Architecture to Promote Regional Identity in East Asia

1. Identity building is an essential element of community building in East Asia. It is an evolutionary project of all East Asians to develop 'we' feelings out of increasing mutual exchanges and understanding. East Asian people should learn from ASEAN's historical undertaking for its community building.
2. Culturally, the region is extremely diverse. The region has inherited various world great civilizations ranging from Confucianism, Buddhism, Islamic, Hinduism and Christian traditions. Such diversity in culture and religions should not be regarded as an obstacle but a rich foundation for identity building.
3. While the architecture to promote regional identity in East Asia would not start from the blueprint, the architectural visions and principle are needed. Fostering feelings of empathy and identity should be encouraged by the members of the community to share problems, prospects and destinies of each other. Identity building belongs to all East Asians who should care for each other and help prosper each other.
4. East Asian Countries should promote mutual understanding of history and culture. Joint research activities on history and culture should be accelerated. Efforts to create academic curriculums for East Asian studies from elementary to college levels should be encouraged.
5. East Asian countries should strengthen the foundation of communication and media. Increased coverage of East Asian affairs in TV, radio, internet, newspapers and magazines should be promoted. Narrowing the digital divide among countries in East Asia is essential to share the benefit of such communications.