

Text of the Welcome Speech by President ITO Kenichi of CEAC and JFIR at the Welcome Dinner in honor of the participants of the NEAT Working Group meeting on “East Asian Food Security” held in Tokyo on July 8, 2010

Prof. OHGA Keiji, Director of the Working Group on “East Asian Food Security,” Dr. Larry WONG, Program Director of the Institute of Strategic and International Studies Malaysia, and all other distinguished members of the Working Group on “East Asian Food Security,” Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to welcome you all to the second meeting of the Working Group to be held full day tomorrow under the initiative of NEAT, the Network of East Asian Think-tanks.

Last year, we organized the first meeting of this Working Group, which yielded many valuable insights. These insights took the shape of a set of policy recommendations which was submitted to, and taken note of by, the ASEAN Plus Three Summit meeting held in Thailand last October. While this first meeting dealt with somewhat broader and more basic concept of food security in this region, the second meeting, for which we are gathering here today, will deal with more detailed and specialized areas of cooperation in food security.

To be more specific, in tomorrow’s meeting, we will deal with issues of, firstly, how to secure access to sufficient quantity of food, which is the basic component of food security and, secondly, how to secure quality of food above the required standard, which is no less important a component of food security. In so doing, we will cover two aspects of food security, namely, quantitative and qualitative. In order to guarantee food security in this region, these two issues, quantitative and qualitative, have to be addressed concurrently and in a well-balanced manner. At any rate, we are fully aware that no country can achieve this task alone as it requires a multifaceted and concerted approach to develop regional cooperation in food security.

It is in this context that the Working Group is to meet tomorrow. Even if a small step forward, I am sure that this Working Group under the leadership of Prof. OHGA will make a great contribution to the success not only of the NEAT Annual Conference in August in Manila but of both the ASEAN Plus Three Summit and the East Asia Summit.

Thank you very much.