

## **NEAT MEMORANDUM No.21**

### **NETWORK OF EAST ASIA THINK-TANKS (NEAT)**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

As a track two process of the ASEAN Plus Three (APT), the Network of East Asia Think Thanks (NEAT) provides intellectual support for East Asia cooperation. NEAT reaffirms that the goal of community building in East Asia is to promote the well-being of the people and realize the East Asian Vision of Peace, Prosperity and Progress. Community building should be based on universal values, including good governance, the rule of law, democracy, human rights, and international law and norms.

#### **II. NEAT ACTIVITIES IN 2024**

This year NEAT has virtually organized its core activities as follows:

##### **1. NEAT Country Coordinators' Meeting (CCM)**

The 39<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> NEAT CCMs were held on 30 May 2024 and 5 August 2024 respectively via Zoom platform under the host of NEAT-Japan. These meetings were participated by NEAT Country Coordinators with their delegations.

##### **2. NEAT Working Group (WG) Meetings**

In addition, 3 WGs were organized under the following themes in 2024:

- 1) Strengthening the Connectivity of Supply Chains in East Asia  
(17-20 July by NEAT China)
- 2) Promoting Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) in Disaster Response  
(25 July by NEAT Japan)
- 3) East Asian Cooperation for SDGs: Sustainable Cities and Communities  
(26 July by NEAT Korea)

#### **III. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the outcomes of NEAT activities in 2024, NEAT submits key recommendations in three following areas to the APT leaders for consideration.

##### **1. Strengthening the Connectivity of Supply Chains in East Asia**

Supply chain connectivity is more than necessary for East Asia, not only good for regional integration, but also indispensable for common welfare with more added value. In pursuit of

resilient regional supply chains, the following recommendations are put forward:

- 1) Long-term cooperation mechanism as well as rule-based and market-oriented business environment: Create APT Supply Chain Working Group to enhance resilience. It is essential to increase transparency for equal and fair treatment for all market players. Industrial parks and special economic zones should be fully utilized.
- 2) Intra-regional policy coordination, synchronization of rules and regulations, and development convergence: Uphold ASEAN centrality. ASEAN centrality is vital for diversified demands. RCEP is a good policy incentive to promote supply chain connectivity. In addition, synergy among intra-regional cooperation frameworks and national development programs is also crucial.
- 3) Key driving forces of infrastructure and technology: Promote infrastructure connectivity and technology sharing. It's urgent to accelerate both domestic and transnational infrastructure projects. A community with shared technology would contribute a lot to supply chain connectivity if share technology becomes popular.
- 4) NEV industry as a pilot project for supply chain cooperation: Facilitate NEV supply chain and tourism value chain. Under the guideline of ASEAN Plus Three Leaders' Statement on Developing of Electric Vehicle Ecosystem in 2023, it's practical to propose and carry out APT Action Plan for Developing NEV Ecosystem in East Asia, which should be formulated as recommendations at the NEAT level and submitted to Track I.

## 2. **Promoting Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) in Disaster Response**

The Asia-Pacific region is the region where natural disasters occur most frequently, making it necessary to promote WPS in disaster response. Enhancing women's participation and contribution is necessary and indispensable to establish more effective, more inclusive, and more robust policies, plans, and management in disaster response. The following are key policy recommendations:

- 1) Enhancing female participation in politics, economy, and social activities from peacetime: To promote WPS in Disaster, it is important to create an environment in which women can be actively and proactively involved in the decision-making process at all levels of politics, economy, and society. Countries, where women play essential roles in political, economic, and social management and decision-making, are not only proactive in promoting WPS but also have introduced highly effective measures. We must increase the number of females who join the political, economic, and social activities and give them equal rights and opportunities to decide and set up policies and rules, especially in the field of disaster management and response.
- 2) Establishing an educational program to eliminate unconscious biases of gender roles and discrimination: One of the reasons for the lack of progress in WPS in Disaster is the existence of gender roles and prejudices that have been historically, politically, socially, and culturally constructed. It is essential to eliminate these biases and to create a society in which all people have consideration and imagination for not only

women but also children, the elderly, foreigners, and sexual minorities, who are often placed in vulnerable positions when natural disasters occur.

- 3) Enhancing research on WPS and sharing good practices and lessons: Various policies and practices have been made in East and Southeast Asia to promote WPS in Disasters. It would be beneficial to identify good practices, lessons, and challenges through academic research and share and utilize them to prepare and improve disaster response measures while taking care of women, children, elders, and all other vulnerable people and unleashing women's strengths and potential to contribute to disaster management.

### **3. East Asian Cooperation for SDGs: Sustainable Cities and Communities**

To integrate these goals into national policies and regional cooperation frameworks and reaffirm their commitment to implementing SDGs, particularly Agenda 11, which encompasses the goals related to Sustainable Cities and Communities, the APT governments are required to

- 1) Strengthen the capabilities of local and sub-national governments for sustainable development through capacity-building and financial support. This should include urban planning, resource management, climate adaptation, and improvements in housing and living conditions.
- 2) Promote city-to-city cooperation through regional networks to enhance learning, facilitate exchange programs, and develop collaborative projects on urbanization, environmental management, and economic development. Utilize fourth industrial technologies, including artificial intelligence, digital platforms, and space technology, to support decision-making.
- 3) Strengthen multi-stakeholder engagement in urban planning and development processes. This involves promoting inclusive decision-making, fostering public-private partnerships for infrastructure projects, and establishing knowledge-sharing platforms. These measures aim to address challenges such as population decline, economic instability, and environmental sustainability by leveraging local resources and fostering collaboration among cities.

The detailed recommendations refer to the WG reports in the Annexes.

## **IV. CONCLUSION**

NEAT greatly appreciates serious consideration by the APT SOM, Ministers and Leaders of the recommendations in this Memorandum, and welcomes opportunities to interface further with decision-makers. We reiterate our continued support to build a sounder, healthier and flourishing East Asian Community. We look forward to making further contribution towards the socio-economic development of the community in the region.

## **V. Annexes**

1) Report of the NEAT Working Group Meeting on Strengthening the Connectivity of Supply Chains in East Asia Sponsored by NEAT China

2) Annexes of Report of the NEAT Working Group Meeting on Strengthening the Connectivity of Supply Chains in East Asia Sponsored by NEAT China : NEAT Recommendations on APT Action Plan for Developing New Energy Vehicles (NEV) Ecosystem in East Asia

3) NEAT Working Group on Promoting Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) in Disaster Response Draft Final Report by NEAT Japan

4) NEAT Working Group on East Asian Cooperation for SDGs: Sustainable Cities and Communities by NEAT Korea