

The 18th Policy Plenary Meeting on “Japan's Economic Strategy towards East Asian Regional Integration”

November 7, 2006

The 18th Policy Plenary Meeting was held on November 7, 2006 under the theme of "Japan's Economic Strategy towards East Asian Regional Integration," in the Conference Room of the Japan Form on International Relations. The report was given by Mr. TOYODA Masakazu, Director-General of the International Trade Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

Regarding the recent developments of economic integration in East Asia, Mr. TOYODA stated that "East Asia is the world's largest market growing at the fastest rate, and it is essential that the ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economical Partnership (AJCEP) Agreement be concluded as speedily as possible in order to prevent Japanese companies from falling into a disadvantageous position in the region. As for the 'Concept of East Asia EPA,' South Korea and China are showing cautious attitude, but we are aiming to establish so-called East Asian version of OECD, 'Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA)' in spring 2007. The conclusion of the US-South Korea EPA is expected in the near future, and along with it, EPA in Asia and Pacific will make more progress. However, it is important that WTO negotiations develop simultaneously."

In response to the report, the present 25 participants made keen queries regarding Japan's agricultural policy and the Bogor Declaration of APEC.