

On January 14th and 15th respectively, the ASEAN+3 Summit (APT) and East Asia Summit (EAS) were held at Cebu Island, the Philippines. Although their significance is large as regional summit meetings held once a year toward the building of an East Asian community, it is hard to say that the reporting of the meetings by the Japanese press caught the whole picture of these summits in both scale and content. The Council on East Asian Community (CEAC) invited Mr. ATSUMI Chihiro, Director-General, Southeast and Southwest Asian Affairs Department, and Mr. AIKAWA Kazutoshi, Director of Regional Policy Division of Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to the 19th Policy Plenary Meeting on January 30th. Participants received a briefing and actively exchanged views. Based on the outcome of the Policy Plenary Meeting, the CEAC Secretariat has prepared a memorandum as follows.

CEAC Secretariat

## **The 10th ASEAN+3 Summit and the 2nd East Asia Summit (Memorandum)**

### 1. Background and Outline

The ASEAN+3 Summit (APT) was held on January 14th and the East Asia Summit (EAS) on the following day, January 15th, at Cebu Island, the Philippines. The ASEAN Summit was held prior to these two summits on January 13th, while the ASEAN-Japan Summit and the Summit Meeting of the People's Republic of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea were also held on 14th. Although these meetings were originally scheduled to be held in December of last year, the government of the Philippines suddenly announced their postponement, due to a typhoon, just before convening the summits and then rescheduled them for January.

APT, consisting of ASEAN countries, Japan, China and Korea, had the first summit meeting in December, 1997, in the midst of the Asian currency crisis. Since then, the APT meeting has been held annually and has produced concrete progress towards regional cooperation, such as the Chiang Mai Initiative. On the other hand, EAS, which consists of 16 countries (India, Australia, and New Zealand, in addition to the 13 countries of APT), was held for the first time in December, 2005, followed by the second meeting this time.

Given the situation that the two frameworks of APT and EAS coexist, how regional cooperation will be developed in Asia has been the center of attention. Because of the

sudden postponement of the summit meetings by the government of the Philippines, concern spread about whether the momentum of regional cooperation would be lost. However, all the leaders gathered in Cebu with the exception of the absence of the Indonesian President from EAS, and concrete outcomes, such as the adoption of the “Cebu Declaration on East Asian Energy Security,” have been produced. Therefore, the summits in Cebu can be positively evaluated. In any event, it is indispensable to maintain the momentum of regional cooperation and to promote concrete measures in various areas, thereby forming a network of close regional cooperation.

## 2. Evaluation

### (1) Concrete progress in the area of regional cooperation

Worthy of special mention as an outcome of a series of meetings is the adoption of the “Cebu Declaration on East Asian Energy Security” at EAS. In an East Asia which continues to grow through a dynamic process of economic development, a further rapid increase of demand for energy is expected in the future. Therefore the necessity of regional cooperation to spread energy-saving technology and to stably secure energy is very high. In such circumstances, it deserves attention that setting goals and formulating action plans, as well as encouraging the use of biofuels and so on, were included in the adopted declaration. In addition, its adoption at EAS means that the declaration includes not only China but also India, which is similarly achieving a rapid economic growth. So it can be thought of as appropriate as a framework.

Focusing on Japan, Prime Minister ABE announced that Japan will accept trainees and provide financial and technical assistance in order to promote energy-saving technology and biofuels, which was praised by other countries. Because this initiative will be a great contribution to energy cooperation, as Japanese, we should also highly evaluate such an active response by the Japanese government.

Meanwhile, the other priority areas for cooperation at EAS other than energy are education, natural disaster management, avian influenza and finance, on which the start of concrete cooperation was also mentioned. Equally, APT also paid attention to the recent expansion of cooperation in the areas of women’s issues, poverty alleviation, disaster management and minerals.

In this way, relationships of regional cooperation in Asia are being concretely established in various areas. It is imperative to continue to promote such developments steadily into the future.

### (2) The Relationship of APT and EAS

After the first meeting of EAS was held in 2005, its relationship with APT, which was already functioning as a framework for regional cooperation, has been questioned. In the declarations in 2005, it was recognized that APT would “continue to be the main vehicle,” while EAS was expected to “play a significant role.” Therefore, the strong impression was that EAS would discuss community building from a broader viewpoint, while APT would take the lead in concrete regional cooperation measures. However, this time, while APT confirmed the direction of the Second Joint Statement on East Asia Cooperation to be adopted in the next Summit of APT, EAS showed a concrete picture of regional cooperation by adopting the “Cebu Declaration on East Asian Energy Security.” Therefore, it seems that the roles of APT and EAS have been somewhat reversed.

With regard to the coexistence of two frameworks, APT and EAS, some people insist that APT should serve as the core framework if we take into consideration the achievements of the APT and the geographical concept of “Asia.” On the other hand, others argue that the framework of EAS would be beneficial for Japan because more industrialized and democratic countries are involved. However, if we look at the actual progress, it would be no problem if we do not decide at this moment which framework should be chosen.

It is true that a situation in which the framework of regional cooperation is not decided would be difficult to understand and pose a sort of uncertainty to the region. But, conversely, such a situation would make it possible for realizable measures to be taken in accordance with the features of APT and EAS (or other regional frameworks such as APEC) in each area of cooperation. Therefore, at least for the time being, we can expect several frameworks to be formed in a multi-layered way and to play complementary roles to each other.

Thus, the following two descriptions can both be thought of as appropriate: that “APT is an essential part of the evolving regional architecture, complementary to the East Asia Summit and other regional fora,” in the Chairman’s Statement of APT; as well as that “the EAS complements other existing regional mechanisms, including the ASEAN dialogue process, the ASEAN+3 process, the ARF, and APEC in community building efforts,” in the Chairman’s Statement of EAS.

### (3) Evaluation on the role of NEAT

Another issue which should be noted from the viewpoint of the Council of East Asian Community is that the Chairman’s Statement of APT has referred to our activities in one independent paragraph, saying “we also noted the Memorandum No.3 on Policy Recommendations on Strengthening the Pillars of East Asian Community Building,

prepared by the Network of East Asian Think Tanks (NEAT), which may form part of the stocktaking of APT cooperation." It can be said that a fair evaluation of the role of NEAT in the process of the development of regional cooperation in Asia is now being built. This makes us realize again the importance of continuing active intellectual contributions through NEAT.