

The 44th Policy Plenary Meeting on “ASEAN+3 Summit and East Asia Summit”

January 27, 2011

The 44th Policy Plenary Meeting of the Council on East Asian Community (CEAC) was held on January 27 at the conference room of the Japan Forum on International Relations, to discuss "ASEAN+3 Summit and East Asia Summit." Mr. ISHIKANE Kimihiro, Deputy Director-General of Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, made keynote report, which was followed by an active exchange of views among Members of CEAC. Mr. ISHIKANE stated as follows:

The international politics in Asia are undergoing tectonic changes, as exemplified by three symbolic incidents that took place particularly in 2010. The first incident was the development of economic integration of ASEAN. The second was the rise of China. And the third was the return of the U.S. to Asia. It should be noted that in the center of all these incidents lies ASEAN. Therefore, the strategic importance of ASEAN as a "theatre" of Japan diplomacy is on the steady increase, and Japan is now faced with a diplomatic challenge to devise comfortable rules with which to engage China or to hedge risks rise of China might pose.

Amid such international environment in this region, ASEAN concerns itself with three tasks. The first is to establish ASEAN Community by 2015, and emphasis is being laid on enhancing connectivity within ASEAN. The second is to maintain ASEAN centrality in regional architectures in the region. The third is to safeguard freedoms of navigation in the South China Sea. On the other hand, Japan concerns itself with three objectives toward ASEAN. The first is to secure ASEAN as a promising market and at the same time as an important production base. The second is to promote ASEAN integration, which is now in progress, in such a manner as to make it beneficial also to Japan's national interest. The third is to safeguard peace and stability in ASEAN as a region.

There are three principles which Japan should take in developing diplomacy with ASEAN. The first is to adopt economic diplomacy toward ASEAN. To be specific, Japan needs to promote export to ASEAN of infrastructures in such areas as nuclear power,

railway and water, which are not yet mature in these countries, with the efforts of both the public and private sectors. The second is to accelerate formation of appropriate rules in regional integration. In this regard, although it is important to engage China, now on rise in this region, we should be careful not to engage China in a way that is comfortable only to China, as is sometimes referred to switch "from the Washington Consensus to the Beijing Consensus." Japan should proceed to promote high-quality rules formation from the economic perspective, as well as from the political and social perspective such as democracy, rule of law and human rights. The third is to contribute to maintenance of peace and stability in this region. In view of the fact that the primary protector of this region's safety is the U.S., it is imperative that Japan should reconfirm the role of the Japan-US alliance. Following these three principles, Japan is to formulate, in cooperation with ASEAN, new "Japan-ASEAN Joint Declaration" and "Japan-ASEAN Plan of Action" for the first time since 2003. With all the tectonic changes now taking place in the international politics in Asia, it is necessary for Japan to put forward all-Japan commitment to ASEAN.

In response to the above reports, 17 members of CEAC joined in an active exchange of views on the topic.