

Minutes of The 3rd Annual Conference of the Network of East Asian Think-Tanks (NEAT)

“Towards an East Asian Community”

23 August, 2005, ANA Hotel, Tokyo, Japan

. Closing Session “Roadmap towards an East Asian Community”

Chair Prof. Ito Kenichi, President & CEO, the Japan Forum on International Relations, Host Country Coordinator of the 3rd NEAT Annual Conference.
Asked the Chairs to report the main points discussed in the respective Sessions they presided over.

Report by Prof. LEE Choonf Lyol, for Chairman, Session 2

- The two WG reporters outlined the outstanding issues in East Asian financial cooperation and global imbalances question.
- During the discussion, the following points were raised among others:
 - 1) Need to reduce the development gaps between countries in order to build a single community.
 - 2) Many proposed to establish an Asian Monetary Fund as a lender of last resort and an agent of monetary surveillance.
 - 3) Possibility of creating a Currency Union in this region was raised. Needs further study. Developing the existing bilateral Chiang Mai Initiatives into a multilateral framework was suggested.
 - 4) Boosting domestic demand in each country was recommended to revitalize the regional economy.
 - 5) Efficient utilization of foreign exchange reserves accumulated in the region was emphasized.

Report by Mr. Nguyen Tien Minh, Chairman, Session 3

- The two WG reports made the important policy recommendations.
- On energy security, institutionalizing a regional energy cooperation framework, including coordination on stockpiling and trans-national energy mechanisms, statistical information systems, energy security; developing the market for conventional energy, including the establishment of an East Asian energy consortium; efficient use of energy, cleaner use of coal, renewable energy.
- On investment, Strong need to promote investment cooperation in East Asian region.
- Improving the intraregional investment environment, including legal, transparency, intellectual property rights, investment networks; identifying regional approaches, like East Asian highways, railways, waterways. Developing Asian bond market. Establishment of an investment institution for East Asia: East Asian investment bank, East Asian investment fund.
- Some reservations about East Asian investment Area because of ASEAN experiences with IAI.

Report by Dr. Makmur Keliat, Chairman, Session 4

- Need to relate the idea of ASEAN community to the idea of East Asia community as, without ASEAN, there would be no East Asia Community. Therefore the plus 3 could play important role in integrating the idea of ASEAN community into the East Asian community.
- The two WG reports seen by one participant as complementary to each other but also comment by another participant that the two reports have some overlapping .
- It was noted that civil society has been included in the process of East Asian community

building as appeared in the report sponsored by Malaysia.

- Many comments on the role of East Asia Summit in the process of East Asia Community building. Some pointed out that there is a need to draw clear distinction between ASEAN+3 and East Asia Summit. There has been suggestion that ASEAN+3 is conceived as a forum for community building while EAS as a forum for strategic dialog.
- A number of participants have also suggested that the name of EAS needs to be changed for two reasons (1) to avoid the confusion between the EAS and the East Asia community (2) the participating countries in the EAS may be broadened in the future to the effect that geographically the term East Asia has lost its meaning.
- A participant has raised the idea that peace and prosperity of East Asia have nothing to do with geography. However, when we talk about East Asia community then geographical boundaries need to be more defined. But there has been also a view that the boundary of East Asia can be created and constructed. There has been also a view that community building should be based on identity by taking diversity of the region into consideration
- On the term “open regionalism,” some participants have pointed out that there is a need to make clear criteria of the meaning of the term. We need to take lessons from the experience of APEC with its large membership. On the other hand, a participant has said that there has been too much attention to functional cooperation. There has been suggestion that ASEAN+3 needs to put emphasis on deepening functional cooperation than widening it.
- ASEAN+3 should be more open to media and needs to guide and educate the media as well.
- The vision of East Asia needs to be more presented in global initiatives.
- The issue of membership of Russia in the context EAS was also discussed.
- The new term ASEAN+6 have been introduced. to replace the term East Asia Summit

Free Discussions followed:

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- I thought we had a good discussion yesterday and ended on a general agreement.
- We think there should be an East Asian geographical configuration to the East Asian community building. This community building should proceed to the ASEAN+3 process which may become the vehicle for progress in the future, but it is basically an East Asian configuration.
- The community must be completely open to dialogue with other major actors in the global community, and with other regional and global institutions.
- The primary vehicle for dialogue and discussion between East Asian nations and others will be what is now called the East Asian Summit, which some felt should be renamed in order to reflect the fact that the participants are not only East Asian countries.

ASEAN Secretariat

- I wish to clarify that I am not suggesting that we use the name ASEAN+6 as a new name for EAS. I would like to use: ASEAN Community Strategy Dialogue.

Chair Thanks for clarification, but this was not included in the draft policy recommendations.

Wrap-up by Prof. Ito Kenichi, Chairman, Closing Session

- Draft Policy Recommendations "Towards an East Asian Community" were distributed and reviewed.
- Final draft was completed by the drafting committee last night. All 13 member country coordinators were represented. Took account of working group reports and exchanges that followed.
- Sequence of presentation attempts to impose a logical framework on the draft recommendations.
- Not asking for further detailed discussion of wording; the wording has already been examined in detail by the drafting committee. Would like the document to either be adopted or rejected.

A number of requests for clarification and suggestions were put forth to amend some parts of the text of Draft Policy Recommendations.

However, the Chair, taking note of some reservations but pointing out the importance for the 3rd Annual Conference to adopt the Policy Recommendations, appealed to the participants that the present text of Draft Policy Recommendations is the result of hard work of the members of the drafting committee until late previous night and, as opening the floor for amendment means chaotic situation, the text of Draft Policy Recommendations should be either adopted or rejected.

Chair

- This must be done on a consensus basis. If there's any Country Coordinator who is opposed to the adoption of the draft policy recommendations, it will be rejected. Are there any objections?
- I see no objections. Hence, the draft policy recommendations have been adopted. The word "draft" will be deleted.
- Will the Country Coordinator for Malaysia confirm hosting the next Annual Conference in 2006?

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- I thought that we had already agreed that Malaysia would host the next conference. We are honored to be able to do this.
- We look forward to welcoming you in Kuala Lumpur, probably in August. However this is subject to further discussion.
- Would like to recognize and pay tribute to all the previous hosts and chairs of the annual meetings: China, Thailand, Japan. They have done excellent work.
- Hopefully each meeting will build and make this more effective and more successful.

Chair

- I wish to express over again our sincere thanks and appreciation to all of you for coming to Tokyo to attend this conference. And also thanks to the ASEAN Secretariat for its participation and services .
- Meeting adjourned.