

**Report of the Network of East Asian Think-Tanks (NEAT)
Working Group on Enhancement of Cultural Exchange in East Asia**

**7-9 June 2007
Jeonju, Korea**

Introduction

1. The first meeting of the NEAT “Working Group on Enhancement of Cultural Exchange” was held on June 8, 2007 in Jeonju, Jeollabuk-do Province in the Republic of Korea. It was sponsored by the Korean Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (KISEAS), the Country Coordinator of NEAT Korea. A total of 18 participants from all 13 ASEAN Plus Three (APT) countries attended the meeting and engaged in an interactive and productive discussion.
2. We, the participants of this NEAT Working Group (WG) meeting, recognize the importance of “cultural exchange” in the building of the East Asian Community (EAC). We also acknowledge that there has been a growing interest in the cultural exchange in East Asia recently, which is a desirable and positive development.
3. We further acknowledge the commitment of the leaders of APT countries to building the EAC, that has been expressed on various occasions as follows:
 - A. Joint Statement on East Asian Cooperation, issued in Manila in 1999, which recognized the importance of enhancing people-to-people contacts and promoting cultural understanding;
 - B. The Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II), issued in Bali, Indonesia, in 2003, which declared that “The Community [i.e., ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC)] shall nurture talent and promote interaction among ASEAN scholars, writers, artists and media practitioners to help preserve and promote ASEAN’s diverse cultural heritage”; and

- C. Kuala Lumpur Declaration on the APT Summit signed in December 2005, which declared that “We will enhance people-to-people exchange aimed at developing a ‘we’ feeling,” that “We will encourage the sharing of ideas through greater interaction between students, academicians, researchers, artists, media, and youths among countries in East Asia,” and that “We will conduct regular exchange of intellectuals, members of think tanks, religious personalities and scholars, which will benefit East Asia and the world through deeper knowledge and understanding so as to fight intolerance and improve understanding among cultures and civilisations.”
4. We, however, express our apprehension that the efforts for EAC building have so far been focused on the area of economic cooperation and that no serious and systematic attempts to enhance cultural exchange have been made. In this regard, we agree that there is a greater need for more practicable and specific action programs and coordinated activities to enhance cultural exchange in this region.
5. We affirm that this is the right moment for all APT countries in this region to work together to promote cultural exchange and to build a cultural community in East Asia. We also express our hope that the WG meetings will provide us with necessary fora to nurture our ideas and concretize our programs to this end.

Key Issues and Principles

6. Recognizing that it is the first meeting of the WG, we agreed that our discussion should include, but not limited to, more general and broader agendas such as follows:
- A. Problems in the current state of cultural exchange in East Asia and the elements detrimental to the enhancement of cultural exchange in the region;
- B. General directions and some basic principles to be uphold in the enhancement of cultural exchange; and
- C. Minimal but necessary institutional arrangements for the enhancement of

cultural exchange.

7. The WG also recognized that there are many different and diverse themes under the broader topic of 'cultural exchange'. It thus agreed that it would be appropriate in this first WG meeting to identify these specific themes to be subsumed under the larger topic of cultural exchange (which are to be henceforth called 'sub-areas of cultural exchange').
8. The WG recognized that the following obstacles had been impeding cultural exchange in the region:
 - A. Lack of an understanding and appreciation of the significance of cultural diversity in the region and of the importance of cultural exchange in promoting the EAC;
 - B. Lack of a political will, institutional arrangements, adequate funding, and collaborative and concerted efforts of both public and private sectors to enhance cultural exchange; and
 - C. Low priority given to the area of culture and to the cultural exchange.
9. The WG emphasized that there should be a change in the attitude, not only of the political leaders, public policy makers (in Track I) and serious practitioners (in Track II and III, including academicians, researchers, scholars, media men, intellectuals and other specialists) but also of the people in general, toward the importance of cultural exchange. It also stressed that some appropriate and immediate measures should be taken to remedy this situation and a long-term projects and programs to deal with the issue of cultural exchange should also be considered.
10. The WG expressed its concern over the 'unidirectional flow of culture' in the East Asian region and a 'unilateral imposition' of one culture over another.
 - A. Some of the participants of the WG meeting showed concern over the possibility that cultural exchange in East Asia would follow a unilateral mode in which only the cultures of bigger and stronger nations are

transmitted to smaller and weaker nations and the latter become a mere receiver thereof.

- B. Others, however, pointed out that the cultural exchange in this globalizing world would rarely be a simple one-way process and that the cultural exchange in this region would eventually become a more interactive and reciprocal one.
 - C. However, all the participants in the WG agreed that it would be advisable to make further efforts to promote a more balanced and reciprocal cultural exchange in the region.
11. The WG also acknowledged a need for a more participatory, people-oriented cultural exchange with balanced roles of the state, market forces, and private sectors.
- A. The WG affirmed that cultural exchange in this region should not be dominated by the market forces nor governed by the government alone.
 - B. It acknowledged that people in every private sector should work in tandem with the public sector to promote cultural exchange.
12. The WG affirmed that to enhance cultural exchange in this region it would be necessary to build an 'institutional framework' within the APT setting, which is responsible for the following tasks:
- A. Collecting and updating information/data on current activities, programs, and plans for cultural exchange in each country;
 - B. Sharing and disseminating these information/data among various agencies and institutions (including government agencies, schools, research institutes, media, and business enterprises) in APT member countries; and
 - C. Monitoring, promoting, and organizing regional cultural exchange and activities related therewith.

Sub-areas of Cultural Exchange Activities and the Modality of WG Meetings

13. The WG identified various sub-areas of cultural exchange activities, which were then grouped into the following categories:
 - A. Arts and literature, popular culture, and sports
 - B. Cultural festivities and cultural exhibition
 - C. Mass media, printing media, publication and translation
 - D. Education: (1) the development of new school curriculum on East Asian societies and cultures; (2) the promotion of extracurricular activities to enhance an understanding of other cultures in the region; and (3) the exchange of primary and secondary school students and teachers
 - E. Academic exchange and research: (1) the promotion of academic exchange—the exchanges of college students as well as scholars and researchers; (2) the establishment of an intercultural-international academic society/organization for understanding East Asian people and culture; and (3) the promotion of the East Asian area studies
 - F. People-to-people exchange: including youth exchange, the utilization of home stay programs, exchange of religious groups, civil society groups, literary personalities etc.
 - G. Tourism: the promotion of an East Asian identity and community through tourism

14. The WG also chose the following five sub-areas as the ‘priority areas’, on which we should concentrate our efforts in the near future to enhance cultural exchange in the region.
 - i. Media
 - ii. Popular culture and cultural festivities
 - iii. Education
 - iv. People-to-people exchange (including academic exchange, student exchange, exchange of religious and civil-society groups, and exchange of other non-state practitioners)
 - v. Performing arts and cultural exhibition

15. The WG agreed that each of the coming meetings of our WG (Working Group on Enhancement of Cultural Exchange) in the next five years should deal with the aforementioned issues (or priority areas of interests) in the following order:
 - yr 2008 : Media
 - yr 2009: Popular culture and cultural festivities
 - yr 2010: Education
 - yr 2011: People-to-people exchange
 - yr 2012: Performing arts and cultural exhibition

16. The WG agreed that the main theme of discussions in the next WG meeting in 2008 should be that of 'media' and the discussion will be focused on, but not limited to, the following sub-topics thereof:
 - Mass media and broadcasting
 - Internet media
 - Printing media and publication
 - Translation

17. Finally, the WG expressed its appreciation for Thai government's program of the 'Cultural City of East Asia' scheduled in November 2007 and wished it a huge success.

**Delegates to the Working Group on
Enhancement of Cultural Exchange in East Asia**

(in alphabetical order by country)

7-9 June 2007

Jeonju, Korea

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