

Opening Remarks at the 4th NEAT Annual Conference

held on 22-21 August, 2006 in Kuala Lumpur

by Prof. ITO Kenichi, Host Country Coordinator of the 3rd NEAT Annual Conference

Dear Dato Jawhar Hassan, Amb. Wu Jianmin, Prof. Yupha Kulangswan, and all other distinguished delegates to the NEAT 4th Annual Conference,

It gives me a special pleasure to attend the 4th NEAT Annual Conference held in Kuala Lumpur. The NEAT was born 3 years ago in Beijing and has grown into a common forum for representatives of think tanks from the ASEAN + 3 countries to meet and discuss the concept of an East Asian community building annually. It was in the 2nd NEAT Annual Conference in Bangkok that “The Basic Rules and Frameworks of the NEAT” was formulated. Since then, in accordance with the procedures defined by “The Basic Rules and Frameworks,” the NEAT has been equipped with a set of Working Groups and this has made it possible for the NEAT to produce a memorandum of “Policy Recommendations.” In fact, the 3rd NEAT Annual Conference held in Tokyo last August could put forward a series of “Guiding Principles of Community Building in East Asia” as an introduction to the “Policy Recommendations.”

This was a very productive role in the ASEAN Plus Three process as a whole. In fact the Chairman’s Statement of the 9th ASEAN Plus Three Summit held in Kuala Lumpur last December specifically referred to the “Policy Recommendations” of the 3rd NEAT Annual Conference held in Tokyo last August and requested the Ministers and Senior Officials of the ASEAN Plus Three nations to study those recommendations and proposals. I would like to remind you that the “Guiding Principles of Community Building in East Asia” included, firstly, “peace, prosperity and progress,” secondly, “sharing universal values such as good governance, the rule of law, democracy, human rights, international law and norms,” and finally, “openness, transparency, inclusiveness and comprehensiveness.” On the basis of such achievements as embodied in the series of “Guiding Principles of Community Building in East Asia” put forward by the “Policy Recommendations” of the 3rd NEAT Annual Conference held in Tokyo last August, I hope the 4th NEAT Annual Conference held in Kuala Lumpur could pave a way for a constructive contribution which the NEAT is expected to make to preparing a second Joint Statement on East Asia Cooperation in 2007.

Thank you very much.