

NEAT WORKING GROUP
on
“The Enhancement of Cultural Exchange in East Asia”
2011 Meeting on “People-to-people Exchange”

FINAL REPORT

Seoul, Korea

21 July 2011

I. Introduction

1. Given that East Asia is composed of different cultures, traditions and nations, cultural exchange is crucial to the enhancement of mutual understanding, solidarity and prosperity of the region. Therefore, countries in East Asia have increasingly identified the importance and necessity of cultural exchange in the process of building an East Asian Community. Towards a humanistic regional community, this working group has dealt with general issues of culture and explored various ways to enhance cultural exchange in East Asia.

2. This working group appreciates the spirit of the 1998 ASEAN Plus Three Summit meeting that made a statement on Asian identity, human exchanges, mutual cultural understanding, and so on. In this vein, NEAT recognized the importance of building an East Asian socio-cultural community in the 2004 annual conference and the necessity of building an East Asian identity in the 2005 annual conference. In order to accomplish the goals set out, the 2006 NEAT annual conference proposed a working group that would discuss the issue of “enhancement of cultural exchange in East Asia.”

3. The first meeting of the NEAT “Working Group on the Enhancement of Cultural Exchange” (WGECE) 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.

4. As a result, the 2007 NEAT Working Group on the Enhancement of Cultural Exchange in East Asia reached an agreement to hold a series of annual meetings for the next 5 years. Each year is supposed to focus on one priority area: the Media (2008); Popular culture and cultural festivities (2009); Education (2010); People-to-people exchange (2011); and, Performing arts and cultural exhibition (2012).

5. In accordance with the agreed schedule noted above, a series of meetings of NEAT WGECE have been held in Seoul, the Republic of Korea, with each priority areas of discussion in the period of 2008-2010. They have been sponsored by the KISEAS and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT) of the Republic of Korea, and attended by delegates from ASEAN Plus Three (APT) countries.

6. With the priority area of discussion being “people-to-people exchange,” this year’s meeting of the NEAT WGECE was held in the period of July 21-23, 2011 in Seoul, the Republic of Korea. It was sponsored by the KISEAS and the MOFAT of the Republic of Korea. A total of 14 participants from 10 ASEAN Plus Three (APT) countries attended the meeting and engaged in an interactive and productive discussion. The meeting brought up diverse and important issues and ideas on the people-to-people exchange as the following:

- A. Identification of the concepts, issues and areas of “people-to-people exchange” in promoting cultural exchange in East Asia
- B. Examination of the roles and functions of “people-to-people exchange” in promoting cultural exchange in East Asia
- C. Exploration of the agendas and measures for promoting cultural exchange through “people-to-people exchange” in East Asia
- D. Policy implications

II. Key Issues and Suggestions

1. As a **general principle**, all the participants in this WG

- a. Recognized the importance/necessity of “people-to-people exchange” in the East Asian community (EAC) building process.
- b. Agreed that “people-to-people exchange” can be a crucial means of promoting “regional identity” among East Asian people.
- c. Suggested that “cultural exchange/cooperation through people-to-people exchange” should be enhanced in East Asia.

2. Some participants expressed the following **concerns** in dealing with “people-to-people exchange” in the region such as:

- a. Political factors that would intervene in the process of people-to-people exchange
- b. Lack of cultural understanding between countries and language difference as factors interfering with people-to-people exchange

- c. Discrepancy in priorities for cultural exchange between developed and developing countries
- d. Need to safeguard and promote the values of national cultural identity and at the same time to enhance the international cultural exchange
- e. Emphasis on long-term and continuous planning and discussion on East Asian community-building
- f. Creation of favorable conditions for overseas workers from some ASEAN countries to preserve and develop their national cultures

3. Participants also addressed **important issues** in dealing with “people-to-people exchange” in the region. They noted the following points in particular:

- a. The importance of spontaneous forms of “people-to-people exchange” such as tourism and overseas education
- b. In addition to the spontaneous exchanges at the civilian level a need to have governmental support, encouragement, and leadership to make “people-to-people exchange” more effective
- c. The effectiveness of diverse forms of bilateral-level youth exchange programs currently being held in many countries in promoting cultural exchange
- d. A need to create an overarching institutional framework to pool the existing exchange programs currently being held at bilateral levels
- e. The importance of scholarly and intellectual exchange to facilitate their research on the question of East Asian identity
- f. A growing circulation of mass culture within East Asia needs more scholarly attention as it functions as a springboard for imagining East Asia as a community

III. Policy Recommendations and Proposals for Specific Measures

Based upon key issues and suggestions addressed in the meeting, the working group made some policy recommendations and proposals for specific measures and programs as follows.

1. The following **specific programs** were proposed to promote “people-to-people exchange” such as

a. **East Asia Culture and Knowledge Expo (EACKE)**

- To combine exchange fairs and seminars on people-to-people exchange in the following fields:
 - Culture Fair (e.g., cultural concerts and exhibitions)
 - Education Fair (e.g., cyber-lecture program, East Asian internship, student and faculty exchange)
 - Tourism Fair (e.g., public and private travel agencies)
 - Expert & Practitioner seminars held concurrently

- To be held annually alternating chair of ASEAN plus 3 countries
- To function as a regional collective hub for people-to-people exchange in the fields of culture, education and tourism
- Each participating country sets up its own booths to showcase its culture and cultural products, educational programs and tourism resources, and to negotiate exchange programs with other participating counterparts
- Expected outcomes of the EACKE include such derivative exchange programs as an East Asian cyber lecture network, East Asian internship, and East Asian student and faculty exchange (Education); an East Asian culture and arts network and an East Asian pop-culture network (Culture); and an East Asian tourism network (Tourism).
- To attract corporate sponsors for funding purposes

b. **ASEAN plus Three Games**

- Creation of a sporting event among ASEAN plus Three countries modeled after Asian Games

2. A **specific measure** was proposed to promote “people-to-people exchange” in the region as follows.

- a. Relaxation of visa requirements to promote people-to-people exchange

3. There was a **suggestion** that two-party collaboration between national government and the private sector is necessary for sustainable people-to-people exchange: While noting that government support provides initial administrative and material support in setting out new ‘people-to-people exchange’ programs, it is the private sector participation that renders those programs sustainable in the longer time frame.

List of Participants

Brunei

Not attending

Cambodia

Mr. Long Ponnasirivath

Deputy Director General of Administration

Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

China

Dr. Cui Haining

East Asian Studies Center, China Foreign Affairs University

Indonesia

Not attending

Japan

Amb. Yasuji Ishigaki

Councilor of the Japan Forum on Int'l Relations

Vice President of the Council of East Asia Community

Korea

Dr. Taehwan Kim

Director, Public Diplomacy Department, The Korea Foundation

Prof. In-Won Hwang
Professor, Dept. of Political Science,
Gyeongsang National University, Jinju, Korea

Prof. Jaehyon Lee
Visiting Professor
Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security, Seoul, Korea

Prof. Doobo Shim
Professor, Dept of Media and Communication
Sungshin Women's University, Seoul, Korea

Prof. Keeseok Kim
Professor, Dept. of Political Science
Kangwon National University, Chuncheon, Korea

Laos

Mrs. Phimpha Keomixay
Director of Training Division
Institute of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Malaysia

Ms. Natalie Shobana Ambrose
Analyst, ISIS Malaysia

Myanmar

Not attending

Philippines

Dr. Grace Gorospe Jamon

Senior Fellow, Professor

Institute of Strategic and Development Studies (ISDS)

Singapore

Dr. Wee Wan-ling C. J.

Associate Professor

School of Humanities and Social Sciences,

Nanyang Technological University,

Thailand

Mr. Chainarong Sripong

Secretary General, The Social Sciences Association of Thailand

Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Srinakharinwirot University

Vietnam

Ms. Ho Hong Hanh

Institute of Foreign Policy and Strategic Studies

Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS
of the NEAT Working Group on
“The Enhancement of Cultural Exchange in East Asia.”
2011 Meeting on “People-to-people Exchange”

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With the priority area of discussion being “people-to-people exchange,” this year’s meeting of the NEAT Working Group on the Enhancement of Cultural Exchange in East Asia brought up diverse issues and ideas. For a specific policy recommendation, this Working Group suggests an **East Asia Culture and Knowledge Expo** as a regional collective hub of people-to-people exchange to be held annually with each ASEAN+3 country alternating overseeing duties of the proposed expo. The suggestion is for each country to have its own country booths to showcase its culture, cultural products, educational programs and tourism resources not only for the purpose of facilitating bilateral exchange, but also for the purpose of shaping multinational networks of exchange at the regional level. This Expo will compose of three sections 1) Culture Fair, 2) Education Fair and, 3) Tourism Fair, each of which will combine expert and practitioner seminars.

Additionally, this Working Group suggests **ASEAN plus Three Games** for a collective sporting event to be held every four years, modeled after the Asian Games. This Working Group also suggests that visa requirements be relaxed in order to better facilitate people-to-people exchange between the ASEAN plus Three countries. Finally, this Working Group stressed the importance of national government-private sector collaboration for sustainable development in people-to-people exchange.