NEAT Working Group on

Enhancing People to People Connectivity

-Education, Tourism and Cultural Exchange-

Final Report

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1. Introduction

Through the institutionalization of ASEAN+3 (APT) in 1997 and the East Asia Summit (EAS) in 2005, regional cooperation and integration in the East Asia region has been promoted. Especially ASEAN, which has enforced its ASEAN Charter in December 2008 and aimed at community building within ASEAN by 2015, has rapidly increased integration efforts. For ASEAN Community Building, enhancing "connectivity" is the most important task, with ASEAN having adopted "ASEAN Leaders' Statement on ASEAN Connectivity" in 2009, "Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity" in 2010. Efforts to integration are made based on three pillars: "Physical Connectivity," which includes transportation, telecommunications and energy networks, "Institutional Connectivity," which includes trade, investment the liberalization and facilitation of the service sector and "People to People Connectivity," which includes education, tourism and cultural exchange. Additionally, APT as well as EAS have adopted the "Declaration of the 6th East Asia Summit on ASEAN Connectivity" in 6th EAS in 2011 and the "Leaders' Statement on ASEAN Plus Three Partnership on Connectivity" in 15th APT in 2012, with both frameworks strongly supporting the enhancing of connectivity within ASEAN. The move towards enhancing connectivity within the East Asia region as a whole is gaining momentum and enhancing people to people connectivity is increasing in importance as a foundation of the improvement of physical and institutional connectivity.

Many efforts have been accomplished on governmental level to improve people to people connectivity. In the education field, the G8 Education Ministers' Meeting and Forum in 2000 already pointed out the importance of promoting international exchange of students, teachers, researchers and administrators and the role of education toward an age of living together and knowledge-based society. The APT framework has made efforts to change the current ASEAN University Network (AUN), which operated to improve students exchange within the ASEAN region, to AUN+3. The Japan, China and Korea framework has established Collective Action for Mobility Program of University Students (CAMPUS ASIA) with universities from the three countries accepting credits, as well as setting a common grading system to promote exchange of students between these countries. In 2012, the ASEAN+3 Education Minister Meeting was held officially for the first time, which led to the adoption of "ASEAN Plus Three Plan of Action on Education: 2010-2017" and showed promising signs of increasing governmental support in the education field.

Detailed plans for the guarantee of a better higher education will be fully progressed at a later time. With the tourism field, the ASEAN+3 Tourism Ministers meeting took place last year, which adopted the "APT Tourism Cooperation Work Plan," a plan calling for cooperation for the next five years, and established the ASEAN+3 Tourism Working Group. In the cultural exchange field, Japan, China and Korea established the "Japan-China-Korea Ministerial Conference on Culture" framework and the "Meeting of the ASEAN+3 Ministers Responsible for Cultural and the Arts" framework. These frameworks planned to strengthen culture and art exchange between governments in the region. For example Japan, China and Korea have already agreed to launch the "East Asian Cultural City" program which is a program that first selects a city that aims for the development of culture and arts and then hosts Asian art exhibitions, cultural events and other events within the city.

Based on the background information and problem consciousness parts mentioned above, what exactly is "the challenge of enhancing people to people connectivity" that the East Asia region needs to focus heavily on? Taking account of the rapidly advancing economic, cultural, and social integration in the 21st century, it is necessary for countries to discuss the issues that they must tackle and share tasks in order for further integration of the region. In addition, to strengthen "people to people connectivity" which is mentioned in the "ASEAN+3 Leaders' Statement on Connectivity Partnership" policies should be implemented efficiently. Furthermore, as reality changes over time, it is necessary to take into consideration whether or not an emphasis should be put on new matters to accommodate the ever-changing environment and to make a sustainable development in the region.

2. Objective

The objective of this Working Group, based on these backgrounds and issues, taking a wide viewpoint from the "track2" position and placing its much emphasis on the importance of the current regional cooperation in East Asia, is to propose a detailed policy recommendations on "the enhancing of people to people connectivity" and to submit it to the ASEAN Plus Three Summit Meeting. In particular, this WG focuses on the people-to-people connectivity through education, tourism and cultural exchange, thereby developing concrete and feasible policy recommendations to be submitted to the APT

Summit Meeting. ASEAN will provide an increasing number of visitors to the region with authentic products, enhanced connectivity, and a safe and secure environment, increased quality of services, while at the same time ensuring an increased quality of life and opportunities for residents through responsible and sustainable people's mobility by working effectively with a wide range of stakeholders. This movement seems to be accelerated with the aim of ASEAN community by 2015.

This Working Group could confirm that education, tourism and cultural exchange are very important clues for formation of ASEAN community as they are strongly related with the people's mobility and connectivity. 22 experts from ASEAN＋3 member countries, the ASEAN Secretariat and the sponsoring organization, the Japan Forum on International Relations (JFIR), participate in the WG meeting. The working group was held in Tokyo, Japan on 31 July 2013 to promote mutual understanding on the current situation and the future challenges of regional cooperation

3. Discussions on People-to-People Connectivity- Education, Tourism and Cultural Exchange

Starting discussion of this meeting, we clarified the three key concepts to consider the Asian community's characteristics. First, we confirmed that the Asian region includes various culture and social systems and it seems to be not a melting pot model but a mosaic model. Considering this point, this Working Group focused on a principle of "harmonized diversity" for connectivity. Secondly, we would like to attach an importance of cooperation for well-qualified sustainable development and inclusive growth. Thirdly, we should focus on the youth's activities and exchanges which can create the people's mutual understanding and human development. These three pillars can consist of fundamental and common points of considering the functions of education, cultural exchange and tourism.

The meeting had the following three sessions.

In Session 1, "East Asia's Education Cooperation", we discussed and re-examined the on-going cooperation in the field of higher education conducted under the governmental framework in APT, which is stated in the "Leaders' Statement on ASEAN Plus Three Partnership on Connectivity". We also examined ASEAN Curriculum Sourcebook as an example of possible project for ASEAN + 3 framework, however the main

focus of discussion was higher education because the higher education can be a common and cooperative education mission beyond country borders while primary and secondary education are often reflected as each nation's agenda and interests as national education system. We tried to find an alternative concrete method for the mutual cooperation of education, especially, policies to promote the students mobility by increasing the number of exchange students and the networking systems between universities were discussed while assuring the quality of cross-border educational programs.

In Session 2, "East Asia's Cultural Exchange Cooperation", we reviewed the present categories of cultural exchange that is conducted by governments, and also tried to find alternative policies in order to increase exchange in the future. We focused on East Asia's current popular culture and the exchange among the youth, so that we understood how to use that to promote the spread of cultural exchange. At the same time, we discussed not only popular culture, but also traditional culture as well and how we may preserve cultural artifacts. We also discussed both benefits and risks of cultural policy dynamics and unequal cultural consumption, and how the region as a whole can contribute to preserving these artifacts and what kinds of policies should be implemented to realize an equal partnership and sustainable development. For example, "East Asian Cultural City" will be a good way for not only China-Japan-South Korea but ASEAN countries to be encouraged to strengthen exchanges and cooperation in cultural heritage protection and cultural industry development.

In Session 3, "East Asia's Tourism Cooperation", we reviewed the activities concerning the field of tourism conducted by governments of each country and discussed alternative policies in order to promote cooperation. Focusing on the "ASEAN＋3 Tourism Cooperation Plan and ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2011-2015(ATSP), we discussed the methods that can promote mutual understandings in culture and society across the region. We also discussed how rural-urban connectivity, especially in relation to community development, can be promoted by tourism. Addressing the challenge related to sustainability that tourism faces in many countries, we explored how tourism could engage with local communities, traditions and relevant industries in promoting for instance "green tourism" and in safeguarding tourism artifacts and infrastructure.

4. **Policy Recommendations**

Based on the discussions above, this Working Group on "Enhancing People to People Connectivity -Education, Tourism and Cultural Exchange- summarized the following policy recommendations;

(1)To expand and support the current higher education network system among ASEAN＋3 countries; i.e. Enlargement of Campus Asia Project by Japan, China and South Korea to ASEAN Countries, and partnership enlargement of ASEAN University Network(AUN) to the East Asian countries under ASEAN+3 University Network (ASEAN+3 UNet) with a characteristic of multi-layered system. To transform the existing ASEAN＋1 international exchange and cooperation programs into the ASEAN＋3 framework.

(2) To promote systematization of regional quality assurance and credit transfer systems of higher education in ASEAN＋3 with cooperation of current systems, i.e. ASEAN University Network – Quality Assurance (AUN-QA), ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN), Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN), ASEAN Credit Transfer System (ACTS), and Collective Action for Mobility Program of University Students (Campus Asia) and so on.

(3) To promote the cultural exchanges for mutual understanding through a regional common project, i.e. to establish the "East Asian Cultural City" which was already launched by China, South Korea and Japan, and to expand this system to ASEAN countries to attractive people's concern to the Asian culture including popular culture.

(4) To develop cultural exchanges among youth to act together for fostering a sustainable development regional society. The exchanges should include "study tours", "green tourism" or "rural tourism" which will provide the participants with the opportunities to interact with local community, to be exposed to rich traditions, as well as to enjoy diverse natural environments.

(5) To enhance institutional building and people skills for cultural exchange and tourism, i.e. to establish a regional language training framework and to create knowledge sharing system on culture and tourism of ASEAN＋3 countries.

(6) To develop academic collaborative research on historical artifacts and to promote preservation and protection of cultural assets and cultural heritage, and cultural industry development by making visible systems and capacity building of human resource.

(7) To establish a trans-national collaborative higher education and research institution in East Asia on regional and global issues like "APT Cyber University" that was originally proposed by the NEAT Working Group on the Enhancement of Cultural Exchange in East Asia 2007-2012 to foster understanding of different cultures and diversity.

(8) To establish a regional financial support system to encourage people's connectivity through educational and cultural exchanges including tourism

[END]

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