

Progress Report
by the ACD Secretary General
The 14th Asia Cooperation Dialogue Ministerial Meeting
Siam Kempinski Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand
10th March 2016

***Mr. Chairman, Your Excellency Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,***

1. 14 years ago, the first chapter of the ACD began in Thailand, where the 17 Foreign Ministers gathered to mark the inauguration of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue. Today, I am very thrilled to see all distinguished delegates from 34 Asian countries gather once again here to celebrate the development of this forum. In this regard, please allow me to express a shared sentiment of sincere appreciation to the Kingdom of Thailand for the excellent arrangements of this Ministerial Meeting and, most importantly, for tremendous efforts Thailand has been making as the coordinator of the forum.
2. As the Secretary General, it is my honorable duty to report the progress this forum has been made and I wish to first share my reflections on this meeting. The Ministerial Meeting today represents a significant event since it is a meeting in between the two Summits. This is our opportunity to review and to evaluate what we have done in the past in order to develop plans for consideration of our leaders during the next Summit.

***Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,***

3. At the time of establishment, the world was less complicated and less connected; therefore, the forum was informal and loosely structured. Presently, all regions are strengthening their intra-regional cooperation to stay afloat and aligned in the volatile and uncertain global situation. For ACD, the desire of such enhancement was echoed in the previous declarations of Ministerial Meeting and the Communiqué of the first Summit, and the ACD's strengthening process has slowly begun to ensure the relevant of the forum to the global situation.
4. The aspiration of enhancement is being reflected today, as the discussion will focus on defining clear goals and distinct directions to become more result-oriented and more responsive. The Meeting will also discuss the restructure of 20 areas of cooperation as well as enhancement of the ACD mechanism - ultimately to allow the ACD to serve the purposes of its existence and to better serve its members. The need to extend the coverage the ACD to the Private Sector and Academia will be, as well, highlighted in order to make the ACD corresponding with the current global circumstance.
5. I hope that the outcome of today's meeting will be marked as a dawn of change of this forum, and the strengthening process will be driven further by all Members, the Excellencies and distinguished delegates here. Furthermore, I hope that today's discussion will strike a dedicated balance between the need to strengthen and the core principles of this forum. Allow me, at this point, to reaffirm that the ACD will continue to provide a non-restricted platform for dialogues and cooperation aiming to enhance one another and to move forward as one continent.

***Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,***

6. I am very delighted to share the good news of our forum. Please allow me to start with the expansion of our membership. I would like to welcome the Republic of Nepal to our forum. With 34 Member States, we are now in a stronger position to collectively pursue our objectives in tackling the regional challenges and seizing global opportunities.
7. I also have the honor to inform that the United Arab Emirates has expressed their interest and willingness in hosting the 15th ACD Ministerial Meeting in Abu Dhabi in the first quarter of 2017. I trust that the Emirates' kindness will be welcomed by all ACD members, and 2017 will be another fruitful year of the ACD under the leadership of the United Arab Emirates.
8. In this connection, I wish to highlight that the ACD has reached another milestone to become a livelier forum. Firm supports are coming from many member states. This year, the ACD's calendar will be full with activities: starting with the ACD High-level on Academic Collaboration last week and this Ministerial Meeting in Thailand, following by ACD Business Conference in Fuzhou and the ACD Forum on Industrial Park in Suzhou, a Seminar on Tourism in the Kingdom of Cambodia. In addition, there will be a Breakfast Meeting in New York to transfer the chairmanship in September, and we will be back here, in Thailand, once again for the 2nd Summit. In this regards, please allow me to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the all proposals and the hosting countries. Thank you very much.

***Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,***

9. Before proceeding further, permit me to underline that the ACD was envisioned to promote regional cooperation, to solidify our common strengths, and to harmonize differences in Asia. In this relation, allow me to emphasize that, promoting synergy and links between regional and sub-regional organizations in Asia could be a way to translate such vision into action. Our Ministers perceived it well as evident in the declaration of the 12th Ministerial Meeting. However, although the Provisional Secretariat has put our best efforts in establishing link with other organizations, this mandate remains ineffective. Because the ACD is still lacking of a status, according to international law, and recognition by our Member States.
10. To succeed this mandate, the ACD needs a firm support from our members in promoting our forum through outreach programs and external activities. In this regards, I would like to initiate a meeting with the heads of other regional and sub-regional organizations in Asia. This dialogue will be a cornerstone to promote the synergy among our regional organizations, and, ultimately, to avoid repeating and competing with each other in Asia.

***Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,***

11. Reinvigorating the ACD will unleash potential of our forum to be more concrete, more responsive and more relevant. I assure you that the ACD will continue to be a bridge that connects all parts of Asia and to provide an open and unrestricted forum for positive thinking.
12. Thailand is where the ACD was formed and it will be where the ACD starts another important chapter: the chapter that will move us forward. Throughout my past 2 years with the ACD, I have been continually inspired by how much we can achieve when we work together. After the meeting today, we will have a vision, a direction and, most importantly, a political will, which will move us forward - and the ACD will be stronger than ever.
13. I look forward to working closely with all of you in 2016. Let us do more, and let us do better.

Thank you.