

Summary of the ACD High-Level Seminar on Asian Development and Cooperation

Dear Your Excellencies,

Now I am pleased to brief to you the discussions of the High-level Seminar on Asian Development and Cooperation that was held yesterday in Qingdao. This seminar was jointly organized by ACD, Boao Forum for Asia (BFA), Network of East Asian Think Tanks (NEAT) of China and the Saranrom Institute of Foreign Affairs (SIFA) of Thailand. The Seminar represents an excellent model of cooperation between "Track I and Track II" institutions of Asia to promote the dialogue in the region.

Over 100 experts, scholars, former senior officials and diplomats from ACD member countries participated in the seminar. The foreign ministers of Thailand, Kazakhstan and Pakistan as well as Secretary General of ASEAN spoke at the opening session chaired by Mr. Long Yongtu, secretary general of Boao Forum for Asia.

In their speeches at the opening session, foreign ministers supported the further promotion of the economic cooperation under the framework of ACD. They emphasized that the globalization is inevitable, yet the process of the globalization need to be well controlled. Only strengthening the cooperation could Asia prevent to reoccur the tragedies like the financial crises in 1997. As is a diversified region, and we should learn to turn this diversification to the motion of the cooperation. Foreign Ministers mentioned that the advantage of the cooperation among asian countries is its huge market, therefore, inter-region trade cooperation should be strengthened. Countries in the region should also expand their internal regional demand in order to lessen the dependence on the external markets and the economic fragility. They further proposed that cooperation in the area of energy, transportation, telecommunication, human resource, agriculture and finance should be promoted continuously.

In the discussion of "Strengthening Asian Competitiveness", many delegates proposed that the fundamental aspects of our cooperation is to form 'Asia Consciousness', and we should seek the common interest of Asian countries on such basis. At present, the key factor to strengthen the Asian competitiveness is to expand the sub-regional and bilateral Free Trade Agreement in Asia. It should also be noted that the industrial sectors and trade structures in China, Japan, Korea, India as well as ASEAN countries are in the process of changes, so there is a need to further study these changes so as to adapt to the new trade environment.

Many experts mentioned that cooperation in the infrastructure should include both soft and hard aspects, i.e. we should not only focus on the construction in the road and railways, but also promote the smooth flow of the goods across the borders. As tourism is concerned, we should solve the problem of visa and quarantine as soon as possible.

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In the discussion of the "Promoting Public-Private Partnership in Asia", although the major advocators of the Asian regional cooperation are the political leadership, yet non-governmental agencies including enterprises, research institutions and private organizations are playing more and more important roles. Information exchanges between governments and enterprises, academics should be strengthened, it is conducive to the decision making of the governments and enterprises. Some of the scholars propose the attention should be made to establish the dialog mechanism for public and private partnership. Since the trans-national corporations are more important in Asian Economy, they should be included in such mechanism.

On Session III Energy Security and Strategy in Asia, it is many scholars' view that in face with the increasingly serious energy problem, people are feeling that Asian countries are short of a coordinated energy policy. At present, governments of Asian countries should build up their political willingness to formulate a common energy security strategy. Such a strategy, with a view to prevent energy poverty and protect the environment, should work out policies to seek new and alternative energy, especially renewable energy, and policies to increase energy efficiency, while paying attention to the key role played by enterprises in implementing common energy policy. Given the

complexity of energy problem, energy security strategy should take comprehensive consideration of many related issues including energy structure, transportation, exploration and financial support.

Amid discussions on the Session IV: Common Agricultural Policy, consensus was reached among the participants that Asia, as the most populated continent with highest ratio of agro-population, has the most outstanding confliction between people and land. Among Asian countries exist both agricultural products-importing and exporting ones. Therefore, agricultural policy plays an important role for Asian countries. At present, population structure, production models, natural conditions and different levels of economic development hinders further deepening of agricultural cooperation among Asian countries. As proposed by many scholars, as the starting point, Asian countries should seek to formulate Common Agricultural Policy). Such Policy may include: 1) Common Food Security Policy, with emphasis on "food security" rather than mere "self-sufficiency"; 2) Common Agricultural Trade and Regional Market Integration Policy. Measure should be taken to coordinate positions in the WTO Doha Round of Talks on issues like market access, quota management and agricultural subsidy, and to edge out those practices that distort agricultural trade. 3) Common Regional Policy on Strengthening Agricultural Competitiveness, including government's extensive service to agriculture (infrastructure and training etc.), enhancement of modern tech transfer to agriculture and strengthening of cooperative efforts in providing fiscal support; 4) To improve cooperation in public and private investment to agriculture.

In conclusion, on this Seminar, scholars from many countries re-emphasized the imperativeness and necessity to further consolidate Asian regional cooperation, and recommended to work out common policies in such strategic sectors as energy and agriculture. It is my hope that the achievement made in this Seminar would facilitate discussions on related topics on the Foreign Ministers' Meeting.