



**THE FOURTH ASIA COOPERATION DIALOGUE
(ACD) FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING
6 APRIL 2005
ISLAMABAD
PAKISTAN**

**PROGRESS REPORT IN THE
PRIME MOVER AREAS**

Progress Report by Bangladesh

PROGRESS REPORT ON ACD COOPERATION ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION: ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY BANGLADESH AS A CO-PRIME MOVER.

A large number of people in Asia especially, in the least developed countries lives under the poverty line. Poverty is the main obstacle to sustainable development for these countries. National Governments in the region are continuously trying to uplift the living standard of its poor people. The government of Bangladesh has made poverty reduction its overarching development objective. In addition to specific programmes aimed at poverty alleviation at national level, the country is also committed to reduce poverty by achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). In order to halve the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day by 2015, a set of goals has been earmarked in the draft Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The paper is expected to be adopted by mid-2005. The strategy takes a nonstick look at changes in poverty situation combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Emphasis of this strategy includes expansion of the scope for pro-poor economic growth in order to increase employment opportunities and income of the poor; faster human development of the poor through education, health, nutrition and other social interventions; empowerment of women for closing the gender gap; social safety nets for the poor and participatory governance aiming at enhancing the voice of the poor and promoting security, power and social inclusion.

Given the high incidence of poverty in the Asian region, active ACD cooperation on poverty alleviation would enable the Asian governments to exchange information on their national poverty alleviation efforts and strategies and to share their experience of "best practices". Under ACD Bangladesh, Vietnam and Cambodia are the co-prime movers in the field of poverty alleviation.

As a co-prime mover on ACD poverty reduction cooperation, Bangladesh organized a seminar on Rehabilitation of Working Children of Bangladesh in March 2003 in Dhaka, Thailand, Vietnam, China, Bahrain, Indonesia, Brunei, Pakistan, Japan and Bangladesh participated in the Seminar. The workshop discussed the issues related to the rehabilitation of working children in their respective countries. A compilation of the country paper was produced. The following areas for potential cooperation among the ACD countries were identified by the Seminar:

- Exchange information among Asian countries on working children and innovative measures for their rehabilitation

- Multilateral cooperation on developing and implementing a realistic education and vocational training programme working children of Asia.
- Seek partnership for NGOs, private sector and civil society for alleviating the conditions of the working children of Asia.

The highlights of the recommendations of the Seminar are as follows:-

- Effective measures should be taken harmonizing legal framework in line with the Convention of Rights of Children to contain and discourage child labour and to ensure their effective enforcement in the domestic laws;
- Ensuring flexible work and school time, maintaining quality education at work place to reduce the drop outs;
- Promoting awareness and community participation to address gender, age, type of job, wage problems at work;
- Capacity building and transnational cooperation to prevent girl child trafficking;
- Adopting comprehensive approach to child labour and rehabilitation with all stakeholders; and
- Network among the ACD countries to share indigenous experience and compilation of their best practices.

So far, there has not been any formal follow up on the implementation of the recommendations of the above Seminar. In this regard, the possibility of holding a meeting to take stock of progress sometimes in the third quarter of 2005 may be considered.

It may be mentioned that as a co-prime mover on poverty alleviation, Vietnam had also hosted ACD Symposium on Poverty Reduction "Experience of Vietnam and other countries" on June 10-11, 2004, Vietnam would be in position to provide further details.

Cambodia also as a co-prime mover had circulated a concept paper on poverty alleviation: Cambodia's experience in 2004.

ASIAN INSTITUTE OF STANDARDS

REPORT BY PAKISTAN
IN ITS CAPACITY AS THE PRIME MOVER

In its capacity as prime mover for the development of an Asian Institute of Standards, Pakistan has been endeavouring to establish and strengthen links between the Standard Institutes of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) countries with a view to an early establishment of an Asian Institute of Standards (AIS).

2. During the 1st Workshop held on 31 May 2004 convened by Pakistan on the "Conceptual Framework for Institutional Cooperation in the Field of Standard among ACD Countries" it became evident that Standard and Quality Control of a product is assuming important significance in a fast globalizing world especially in light of new international legislation governing trade, industry, environment and the protection of consumer rights.

3. Broadly the Karachi workshop had laid the foundation of establishing an Asian Institute of Standards through the following steps:-
 - i. Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA) would be the nodal point for cooperation in the field of standards among ACD countries. For this purpose, a special Cell will be established at PSQCA.
 - ii. International Standards (ISO, IEC etc.) will be adopted as national standards by ACD countries as basic policy.
 - iii. Develop a Directory of all the recognized testing laboratories in the country in its public and private sectors with an inventory of specialized equipment and to place it on ACD website to enable the ACD countries to share these facilities.
 - iv. Encouraging bilateral and multilateral Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRA's) among ACD countries.

- v. Close collaboration amongst ACD countries at various Technical Committees of International Standardization Organizations (ISO).
 - vi. Preparing and launching a page on Standardization Institutes and activities in the ACD countries to be included in the ACD website, maintained by Thailand.
 - vii. Sharing training facilities among ACD countries and to organize special training facilities in collaboration with relevant international organizations.
 - viii. Regularly organizing meetings of the Working Group to define the framework of cooperation. The next meeting of this Expert Working Group would further deliberate on format of the proposed draft Memorandum.
4. As a follow up to these recommendations, Pakistan Standard and Quality Control Authority (PS&QCA) Karachi has been officially designated by the Government of Pakistan as nodal point for coordination amongst the ACD countries. A special cell dealing with the ACD has also been established.
5. The ACD Cell at PS&QCA (Karachi) has been working assiduously to develop a directory of recognized testing laboratory; inventory of specialized equipment and directory of experts in various areas of standardization across the region.
6. The nodal point has established contacts with the respective ACD Standard Institutes to authenticate/supplement information on these three areas, which the ACD cell at PS&QCA has forwarded to them.
7. Although Singapore, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Republic of Korea, Thailand and Brunei Darussalam have promptly responded to the queries of the nodal point, information and responses from rest of the ACD member states is awaited. As soon as complete information is received, arrangements for holding of 2nd Workshop on the issue will be made .

8. A web page on standardization institute and other related activities in the ACD countries to be linked with the main ACD website maintained by Thailand under preparation and will shortly be shared with the member states for their views, comments and suggestion.

9. On the sharing of training facilities amongst ACD countries and organizing special training facilities, Pakistan will shortly be circulating information of its training facilities and expertise in Standardization and Quality control for utilization by other ACD member states. Pakistan has also asked to all ACD member states to share this information with the nodal point, so that it could be transmitted to all ACD member states.

10. Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) are an important component of standardization activities and a catalyst in facilitating trade amongst the ACD countries. Pakistan strongly favours conclusion of such agreements either bilaterally or amongst ACD countries. Pakistan has asked all member states to expedite their views for a focused discussion on the format and drafting of a general memorandum during the second workshop, which will be convened in Pakistan shortly.

Brief Reports on ACD Agricultural Cooperation

Progress Report by China

The Chinese Government in consideration of the reality and needs of Asian countries in agriculture, submitted the Concept Paper on Agricultural Cooperation to the 2nd ACD Foreign Ministers' Informal Meeting held in June, 2003 in Chiang Mai, Thailand, proposing to convene the Workshop for ACD Agricultural Ministers in May, 2004 in Beijing, China so as to discuss issues of and to work out plans for agricultural cooperation.

I. Workshop for ACD Agricultural Ministers

The Workshop was held on 22-23 May, 2004 in Beijing. It was a high-profile prominent event for agriculture in Asia. Except Singapore and Qatar, the other 20 ACD member countries sent delegations to the workshop, including 11 delegations at the ministerial level and 6 at vice-ministerial level. Although 117 delegates attended the workshop. On the basis of full discussion, it adopted the Joint Initiative of ACD workshop for Agricultural Ministers, which pinned down the prioritized areas and modalities of agricultural cooperation.

II. Follow-up Activities, 2004.

In response to the Joint Initiatives, China hosted the Workshop on Asian Rice Development and later the Agricultural Policies Forum, extending invitations to all ACD members, in order to enable the rice production and agricultural policies to play the part in food security and sustainable development of agriculture in Asia and to promote growth and booming of Asian farming.

1. Seminar on Rice Development in Asia. From Sept.23 to 25, 2004 in Changsha, Hunan Province, 50 representatives from ACD member countries participated in the successful Seminar on Rice Development in Asia Professor Yuan Longping, Father of China's Hybrid Rice, was also present and made a speech on China's research and extension of Super Rice.

At the Seminar, representatives from the ACD member countries elaborated their policies and measures about rice production in tackling issues of their national food security and major concerns, held discussions on key areas and patterns for cooperation in the field of rice production, and adopted the Minutes of the Seminar on Rice Development in Asia.

2. Agricultural Policies Forum. The Agricultural Policies Forum was held on Jan 10-12, 2005 in Beijing. It is the first forum on agriculture policies after the establishment of ACD mechanism. Representatives from 18 ACD member countries attended this forum.

These representative briefed the Forum on their latest domestic development and experience on agriculture and policies of rural development. Many of them also reviewed the effective cooperation among Asian countries and made positive assessment of such cooperation. They all believed that the Forum was a great opportunity for the ACD member countries to share information on their agricultural policies. Agricultural departments of the ACD member countries gave great support to the Forum and among them. Pakistan and Bahrain sent vice-minister level delegations to the forum. The Forum also explored possibilities of agricultural cooperation and made the following joint proposals on cooperation in the fields of agricultural economy and technology as well as follow-up activities under the ACD system:

- 1) Establishing an ad hoc committee for ACD agricultural cooperation;
- 2) Reinforcing information communication for project implementation;
- 3) Exploring financial sources and identifying key areas for cooperation; and
- 4) Further promoting intra-regional agricultural trade among ACD member countries.

Finally, agreement reached on further agricultural led to the Minutes of ACD Agricultural Policies Forum.

III. Follow-up activities, 2005

1. **ACD agro-biotechnology training courses.** China is going to sponsor ACD agro-biotechnology training courses in Beijing in August 2005 for trainees from all member countries in order to enhance exchanges and cooperation between ACD member countries in research and extension on agro-biotechnology, give a full play to this technology in food security and agricultural sustainable development in Asia, and promote common development and prosperity of Asian agriculture.
2. **Research on ACD agricultural cooperation.** Aiming at promoting agro-biotechnology with other member countries, China is going to undertake research programs on ACD agricultural cooperation so as to have a better understanding of requirements from other member countries for agro-cooperation and to facilitate more effective agro-cooperation among member countries.

As the prime mover on ACD agricultural cooperation, China will, together with other ACD member countries, make efforts for the common agricultural development in Asia.

Progress Report by Indonesia

On

Energy Security Cooperation

Indonesia has agreed to be one of the prime movers in the area of energy security. There are two ACD meetings in the field of energy security in 2004, namely the ACD Working Group Meeting on Energy Security held in Manama, Bahrain on 13 January 2004 and the ACD Working Group meeting on energy held in Makati City, Philippines on 19-20 May 2004. Both meetings have resulted in several important recommendations in helping efforts to achieve energy supply security in the region.

Considering the importance of energy security to Asian countries, the third ACD Ministerial Meeting, held in Qingdao, China on 22 June 2004 agreed on document "Qingdao Initiative", which member countries decided cooperation be implemented voluntary in the spirit of ACD, among others: Enhancing exchange of energy information; Encouraging cooperation on energy conservation, energy efficiency, renewable energy; promoting scientific, technological and commercial cooperation on renewable energy; Enhancing cooperation on rural electrification; Sharing views in international energy market; Promoting a conducive environment to attract investors; Strengthening cooperation in the construction of oil and gas pipelines and safe energy transportation; Strengthening cooperation in human resources development and technology; and Exploring the possibility to establish a forum on energy.

Indonesia will organize ACD Energy Forum in Jakarta in June 2005. The meeting will discuss energy security cooperation activities; especially follow up of the Qingdao Initiative. Representatives from ACD member countries are invited to participate in the meeting and detail information on the said meeting will be conveyed through diplomatic channel.

Progress Report by Malaysia

SUMMARY REPORT ON MALAYSIA'S PROGRESS AS PRIME MOVER IN THE ACD COOPERATION AREA OF E-EDUCATION

Malaysia being the prime mover for e-Education or e-Learning hosted the first ACD e-Education Workshop in April 2004. The workshop produced several recommendations in the areas of policy, technology, human capacity building and knowledge sharing. These recommendations were shared with the respective ACD governments during the 3rd ACD Ministerial Meeting in Qingdao, China in June 2004, with the view of creating a concern platform for ACD cooperation in e-Education.

2. Following from the 1st ACD e-Education Workshop, Malaysia in its role as the ACD prime-mover for e-Education, has designated two agencies, namely the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) and the Open University Malaysia (OUM) as lead agencies which have been tasked with driving the e-Education initiative forward. To date, these agencies have followed up on the suggestions and recommendations from the 1st ACD e-Education workshop with consultations with various parties.

3. Emanating from the discussions and recommendations of the First ACD e-Education workshop, The Qingdao Declaration on Asia Cooperation and consultations within Malaysia, the establishment of the Asia e-Learning University (AeU) is proposed. The AeU is envisioned to serve as a hub for the provision of expanded educational opportunities and exchanges of information among Asian countries. To this end, the AeU will be initially hosted at OUM which will incubate the AeU and the equity structure of the AeU will be restructured from time to time according to the changing needs of the education sector in Asia.

4. Malaysia will be circulating a paper entitled 'Base Paper for the Formation of the Asia e-Learning University (AeU) at the 4th ACD Ministerial Meeting in Islamabad, Pakistan 4-7 April 2005.

2005/2006 Calendar of ACD activities

| <u>Country/Area of Cooperation</u> | <u>Activities</u> | <u>Dates and Venue</u> |
|---|--|---|
| MALAYSIA | | |
| e-Education | Scoping the formation of Asia E University based on Resolution passed at the E-Education Workshop held in April 2004 attended by member ACD countries. | Jan 2005, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia |
| | Pre-ACD meeting on E-Education – Final discussions on proposal for the Asia E-University. | March 2005 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia |
| | Fourth ACD Ministerial Meeting | April 2005, Islamabad Pakistan |
| | Roundtable on the development of Asia e University network among member ACD countries on identification of capacity building courses to be offered by Asia e-University. | May, 2005 Venue to be determined. |
| | Workshop on Identification of capacity building courses to be offered by Asia e University. | July/August 2005 Venue to be determined |
| | Training of personnel on e-learning technologies | September/December 2005 Venue to be determined |
| | Offer of courses to member ACD countries. | January 2006 onwards. |

Progress Report by Japan

On

Environmental Education

In 2004, the government of Japan held the workshops for the strengthening legal infrastructure and environmental education respectively as prime mover project.

The outline of these workshops are as follows:-

Environmental Education

“In the Asia Cooperation Dialogue of Japan Environmental Education – Toward the Implementation of the United Nations Decades of Education for Sustainable Development ” was held in the city of Musashino in June 2004, and officials from the capital embassy staff in Tokyo, NGOs, researchers, private sectors and international organizations from 16 countries participated.

This dialogue reconfirmed the great interest on environmental education and it was highly evaluated from member countries that it identifies the problems on environmental education and future direction, and it also contributes to establishing the relationship and strengthens the cooperation among the participants.

The Government of Japan intends to contribute to realizing “the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development” proposed by Japan’s Prime Minister Junichiro KOIZUMI on the occasion of the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg in 2002. In this context, the launch of the Decade in the Asia-pacific region is scheduled to be held in Japan

in June this year, and related events are come up in the EXPO 2005 AICHI. Responding to such development, Japan plans to organize, the dialogue for Education for sustainable Development which will be a follow up of the workshop held in the last year. Japan earnestly hopes that this dialogue will contribute to sharing experiences and good practices on the Education for Sustainable Development among ACD countries and further development of the ACD.

Progress Report by Japan
on
Strengthening Legal Infrastructure

The workshop for the strengthening legal infrastructure was held at the JICA Institute Cooperation at Ichigaya, Tokyo in May 2004 and 35 participants from 19 countries participated. This workshop was also highly appreciated for providing the opportunity for dialogue in order to share the experience and knowledge of each countries including Japan and to promote the recognition of the importance of strengthening the legal infrastructure through the frank and free discussion.

The government of Japan has been exploring the possibility to organize a workshop in order to contribute to those fields from now on.

Progress Report by Republic of Korea

1. Progress in the Field of IT Cooperation

Being designated as the prime mover of IT cooperation at the 2nd ACD Ministerial Meeting in Chiang Mai, 2002, the Republic of Korea has developed diverse IT cooperative projects, designed to bridge digital divide among the ACD members, especially through two institutions: the Ministry of Information and Communication (MIC) and the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

2. MIC's IT Cooperation Projects

The MIC has been conducting Special Cooperation Projects, IT Training Courses and Internet Youth Volunteer Corps.

(Projects of 2004)

- Hosted the "1st Telecommunication Policy Course with ACD" in the ROK (May 18-25, 2004, Seoul) in which 20 IT officials and specialists from 14 ACD member countries participated.
- Dispatched IT Policy Advisory Groups to Vietnam and Indonesia (November, 2004).
- Dispatched 128 Internet Youth Volunteers.

(Plans for 2005)

- Host the "2nd Telecommunication Policy Course with ACD" in the ROK (October 5-11, 2005, Seoul) in which 20 IT representatives from some ACD member countries will participate.

- Dispatch IT Technology / Policy Advisory Groups.
- Open mid-and long-term IT Training Courses on advanced information and mobile programs.
- Conduct cooperative projects on e-government and telecommunication policy.
- Dispatch 120 Internet Youth Volunteers to promote the spread of informationization throughout Asia.

3. **KOICA's IT Cooperation Projects**

The KOICA has performed a variety of IT cooperative projects, including grant of IT equipment supply and IT training, targeted towards almost all ACD members.

(Projects of 2004-2005)

IT cooperative projects worth USD 12.3 million were carried out for ACD members in 2004. And such projects will continue into this year.

- Dispatched 162 Volunteers and specialists
- Invited 180 trainees from 20 ACD members to the IT Internship programs
- Supplied IT -related equipment worth USD 174,000 to some ACD member countries.

Progress Report by Singapore

On

SMEs Cooperation

Brief Report

1. Broad concept/principle of the area of cooperation:
 - To promote sharing of experience and success strategies among Asian SMEs.

- 2-4. Activity / Brief information about the activity / assessment of the progress of the area of cooperation:
 - The importance of Asian SMEs cannot be emphasized more.
 - Singapore, in its capacity as the ACD Prime Mover for cooperation in SMEs, hosted a meeting for SMEs promotion agencies of ACD countries from 15-16 July 2003. 14 ACD members attended the meeting. The meeting enabled SMEs agencies to share their experiences, discuss successful strategies and exchange views on future developments in the SMEs sector.
 - Building on this meeting, Singapore had invited SMEs from ACD countries to participate in the International Small Business Congress held in the Singapore from 21-24 September 2003. With its theme of "*Enterprise Unlimited*" *Opportunities and Challenges in Global markets*", the conference enabled SMEs from ACD countries and beyond to network and strengthen their links.

5. Future direction of the area of cooperation:
 - With SMEs increasingly playing a catalyst role in many developing economies across Asia, there will be greater impetus and scope for more exchanges and information-sharing amongst SMEs in the ACD countries.

Progress Report by Thailand

On

Financial Cooperation

Thailand is the prime mover in the area of financial cooperation and has set up a Working Group on Financial Cooperation to serve as a primary channel for experts from ACD member countries in this field to interact, discuss and exchange views particularly on the issue of Asian bond market development. The Asian Bond Market Development Initiative under ACD serves three important purposes which are (1) to render political support for the initiative by resorting to technical work from other forums (2) to expand geographical coverage by inviting more countries to participate in the initiative, and (3) to provide (additional) technical work where appropriate.

The First Working Group on Financial Cooperation Meeting was held on 12 May 2003 in Bangkok, Thailand with the aim to share a broad overview of the Asian Bond Market Development Initiative among ACD member countries. A remarkable achievement of the meeting was a shared perception on the importance of the Initiative that led to the drafting of the Chiang Mai Declaration on Asian Bond Market Development (CMD), subsequently adopted with the political blessing of ACD Ministers at the 2nd ACD Ministerial Retreat on 22 June 2003 in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

To carry forward the momentum of the Initiative, Thailand hosted 2 consecutive meetings in order to carefully look into essential elements including demand, supply and infrastructure that could help promote the Asian Bond Market Development process. First, the ACD Special Expert Group Meeting on Asian Bond Market Development was held on 27 March 2004 in Bangkok. The meeting provided an arena where experts from both public and private sectors exchanged views to seek appropriate policy recommendations to further develop

the Asian bond market. As a result, a mutual view was agreed that there was a need to seriously undertake relevant work to promote supply of Asian bonds denominated in local currencies.

Subsequently, the ACD informal Meeting on Promoting Supply of Asian Bonds was held on 1 May 2004 in Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting recognized the need to create sufficient supply of bonds by regularly issuing investment grade, local currency denominated bonds at different maturities to create benchmark yield curves. The meeting also recognized the need to provide conducive environment by putting in place solid infrastructure such as efficient clearing and settlement systems, less restricted foreign exchange controls, appropriate tax treatment etc. to ensure that Asian bonds will be liquidity traded domestically as well as across borders.

Thailand, with full support from all ACD member countries, may host another Working Group on Financial Cooperation Meeting in the future (2005).

Progress Report on Thailand's Prime Mover Area of Tourism

Thailand, as the prime mover in the area of Tourism, hosted the first ACD Tourism Business Forum in Phuket, Thailand from 22-24 May 2003. The co-prime movers in this area also include Cambodia, Myanmar and Pakistan. The meeting was attended by representatives from both public and private tourism agencies from 11 ACD countries.

The goal of the meeting was to enhance the region's competitiveness and negotiating power against other competing destinations and develop a more sustainable tourism industry. The specific objectives include joint promotion programs of ACD tourism products, the establishment of a tourism related network between ACD public and private sectors and the harmonization of policy and strategic planning in regional tourism development. The meeting discussed four major issues of concern within the tourism industry, namely intra-regional tourism promotion initiatives, safety and security within the region, human resource development, and the development of tourism SMEs.

The Second ACD Tourism Business Forum hosted by Thailand during 18-20 July 2004 in Chiang Mai, Thailand was aimed at following up on the joint actions in four cooperative areas of tourism agreed at the First ACD Business Forum. The meeting also had a constructive discussion on energy saving and investment promotion in tourism industry. The meeting came to a successful conclusion with participants adopting the Chiang Mai Initiatives on Tourism.

Cambodia proposed at the Second Tourism Business Forum to host the Third ACD Tourism Business Forum in 2005 while India expressed its willingness to host the Fourth Forum in the following year.

Progress Report by Vietnam
on
Poverty Alleviation

1. Report of the activities of the Prime Mover:

1.1 Progress report on Poverty Alleviation

As the Prime mover on Poverty Reduction within the framework of Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), the government of Vietnam hosted the first ACD seminar on "Poverty Reduction: Experience of Viet Nam and other countries" in HA Noi, Viet Nam on 10th – 11th June 2004. Representatives from 16 ACD member countries attended the Seminar. There were more than 20 representatives at the Seminar which shared different experiences of ACD member countries and others in combating poverty. The Seminar also had in-depth discussions on (i) policy issues; and ii) mobilizing internal and external resources for poverty reduction and implementation issues.

2. The Seminar held the view that poverty is multi-faceted phenomenon with sophisticated causes and consequences. Poverty is closely linked with illiterates, poor health, gender inequality as well as lack of choices, access to land, credit, education, etc. Recognizing that there is no one-size-fits-all solution for poverty reduction, participants expressed their agreement that poverty eradication policies should be based on 2-leg strategy (i) generating high and sustainable economic growth (ii) paying equal attention to social and human aspects during economic development.

3. Participants recognized various national framework policies for poverty reduction are being pursued with long-term visions and objections

in the region. All countries in the region have adopted national five-year development plans in which human development and poverty reduction are closely linked. The seminar emphasized the importance of country ownership, partnership, and participatory approach and effectiveness in the implementation of programmes for the poor, especially at the grass root level.

4. A number of proposals and recommendations were made to scale up efforts for poverty reduction and foster cooperation in this area, especially for developing genuine partnership between developed and developing countries such as (i) comprehensive approach in addressing poverty issues and other socio-economic issues (ii) partnership between all stakeholders and close consultation between donors and recipient countries both in poverty alleviation (iii) efforts to settle trade disputes and opening market access for developing countries.

5. The Seminar proposed a number of measures to further strengthen ACD cooperation activities in the future as follows:-

- Cooperation on development on sub regions, corridors, economic triangles, etc. among countries in the region.
- Application and replication of tripartite cooperation model among ACD member countries in agriculture development, provision of basic social services such as education, health care etc.
- Continue dialogue among member countries to exchange views and to share best practices in poverty reduction.
- Promotion of active participation of all stakeholders in ACD member countries in the fight against poverty.

1.2 Progress Report on Human Resource Development.

Human Capital is an important source for economic development. Experiences of Asian Countries, in particular East Asian share a common thread i.e., education (both formal, informal education and vocational training) has been given a high priority. So far, there has no initiatives to strengthen cooperation in ACD member countries in human resource development. Viet Nam will formulate a concept paper on human resource development with the aim to conduct a study on HRD as the very first cooperative step. This study will focus on models, policies, implementations and best practices in the human resource development, particularly "providing education and vocational training for all". The study will be sent to all ACD countries and presented at an international seminar or conference on HRD held in the near future in one of ACD countries.

Progress Report by Cambodia

On

Tourism

We place emphasis on the growing importance of the tourism industry as one of the main sectors of economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being of the region. Tourism is also a key vehicle for promoting mutual understanding and respect for the natural environment between and among peoples throughout Asia. Asian nations must make greater efforts to enhance closer cooperation and to facilitate the development of this sector through regional and sub-regional coordination within the ACD forum. To this end, we express our satisfaction at the progress of cooperation through the holding of the ACD Tourism Business Forum (TBF) in Thailand on the two previous occasions. We look forward to the 3rd ACD-TBF to be held in Cambodia this year and to the 4th ACD-TBF in India, in 2006, with the view to further consolidating the ACD process, and deepening ACD cooperation by concretizing our project activities in this area.

Progress Report by Cambodia

On

Poverty Reduction

Over the past decades, the developing countries of Asia have entered new phases of development with significant success in poverty reduction and social development. The countries have also expressed their full commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and adopted time-bound and measurable goals and targets for combating extreme poverty, hunger, diseases, illiteracy, environment degradation and gender discrimination. In pursuit of such agendas, the countries have committed themselves to take more actions; greater leadership for results at all levels in the society, shared partnerships, and enhanced mobilization of and efficiency in the use of development resources to make the achievement of the MDGs a reality for all.

In this regard, the ACD countries urge that more resources should be committed to the developing countries in the implementation of the MDGs as the world leaders will meet to review the MDGs at the UN in New York this year.