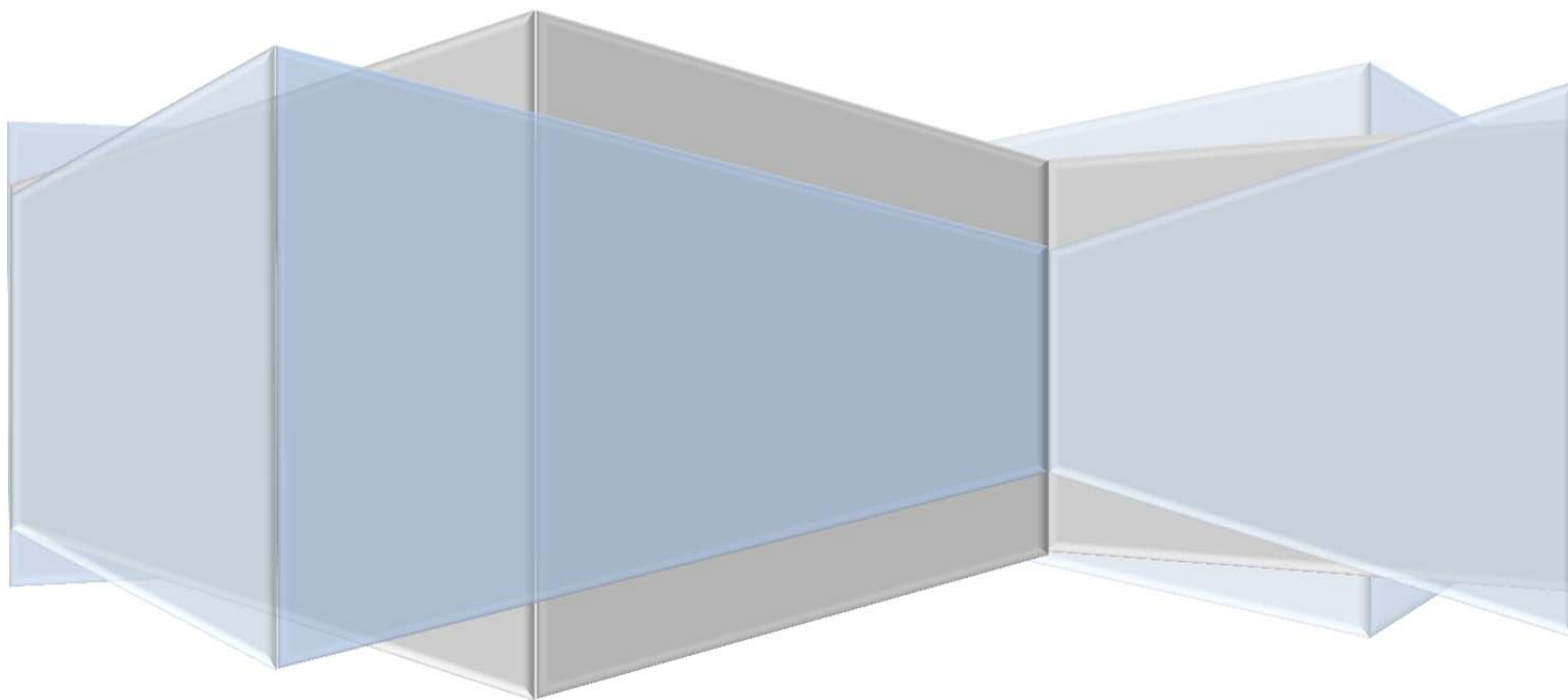


31 October-1 November 2014

North-East Asia Development Cooperation Forum



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31 October – 1 November 2014

Seoul, Republic of Korea

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Organized by

UNESCAP East and North-East Asia Office

Korea Association of International Development and Cooperation (KAIDEC)

In collaboration with

China International Development Research Network (CIDRN)

Japanese Society for International Development (JASID)

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31 October – 1 November 2014, Seoul, Republic of Korea

Background

North-East Asia has become the key player in development assistance and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific as well as in the world. However, there is no subregional or multilateral process that facilitates joint reviews of policies and practices of such assistance and cooperation, and promotes dialogues and cooperation among key stakeholders in North-East Asian countries. While development cooperation among those key players potentially brings a great benefit for the development of the Asia Pacific region, there has not been strong drive for such cooperation, due to varying strategies for development assistance and geopolitical factors among these countries. Thus, the Forum sought to explore how development cooperation can be strengthened, focusing on four countries in North-East Asia, i.e., China, Japan, Republic of Korea and Russian Federation, and to strengthen the link between politically neutral bodies for policy dialogue and multidisciplinary research on development issues and cooperation.

The Forum was jointly organized by **ESCAP East and North-East Asia (ENEA) Office**, which covers 6 member states (China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia, Republic of Korea, and Russian Federation) and 2 associate members (Hong Kong, China and Macao, China), and **Korea Association of International Development and Cooperation (KAIDEC)**, which is a network of scholars from academic institutes, government personnel working in development cooperation, private sectors, field workers and NGOs. The Forum also collaborated with **Japanese Society for International Development (JASID)** and **China International Development Research Network (CIDRN)**, as well as **Green Technology Center Korea (GTC-K)**.

It was envisaged that this Forum leads to further activities on development cooperation in the subregion.

Goals:

- To facilitate analytical discussions on policies and practices of development cooperation in North-East Asia
- To identify potential areas of collaboration among North-East Asian countries in development cooperation and assistance
- To create a network of research institutions, government institutions, inter-governmental organizations, and UN organizations engaged in issues related to development cooperation in North-East Asian countries
- To create a forum of researchers, practitioners and policy makers to critically review and analyze trends and policies of development cooperation in North-East Asian countries
- To marshal the potential of North-East Asia in making a fundamental difference to the development of Asia Pacific region

Structure of the Forum

It was proposed that the discussion at the Forum be structured as follows.

Session A: North-East Asian countries' experience in development assistance

Session 1: *Experiences of North-East Asia*

North East Asia hosts countries of various development stages and each of them possesses strengths and weaknesses from their respective development history, strategies, and performances. Keeping these factors in mind, this session highlights common features as well as particularities of each country in their strategies and approaches for development cooperation and discusses opportunities and challenges in development cooperation within North-East Asia.

Session 2: *Improving effectiveness of development assistance prospect for North-East Asia*

This session will discuss the main challenges and concerns in ensuring the accountability and transparency of development partners in ENEA. Example may be drawn from (but not limited to) the varied reaction of ENEA countries to the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (e.g., Japan and Korea as OECD members vis-à-vis China and Russia as BRICS block). It is a result of the Busan partnership agreement (on effective development cooperation), established with focus on inclusive partnership as an effective implementation and monitoring mechanism for global goals, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Session 3: *South-South and Triangular cooperation:*

Since 2008 High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness of the OECD/DAC, international development community has envisaged South-South and Triangular cooperation mechanisms as effective approaches to development cooperation. The East and North-East Asia holds traditional donor as well as emerging donors, blurring the distinction between South-South and triangular cooperation. In addition, activities among "South" countries range from trade to capacity building with different degree of "development assistance" elements. In the light of this, this session will discussions on potential areas of mutual interest among ENEA countries for development assistance in the context of South-South and Triangular cooperation.

Session B: Regional cooperation in North-East Asia for sustainable development

Session 4: *Towards regional development cooperation for sustainable development in the region*

With intensifying pressure on resources and its inter-linkages with socio-economic development, sustainable development has become an urgent concern. The environmental issues become critical concern for development in the North-East Asia. Many of the environmental issues are borderless in nature or common among neighbouring countries. Environmental issues thus pose both challenges and opportunity for effective cooperation among NEA countries while most NEA countries have taken environmental sector as a key area of development cooperation. This session

will discuss on experiences and potential areas of development cooperation to address environment issues.

Session 5: *Implementing cooperation for sustainable development in the region – technology facilitation*

In materializing sustainable development, one of the areas of development cooperation is development, transfer and dissemination of environmentally sound technologies (technology facilitation). Countries in ENEA have many initiatives for such technology facilitation. This session will discuss on such initiatives with particular focus on potential for cooperation among ENEA countries to pursue such initiatives, highlighting benefits and obstacles to promote cooperation among ENEA countries.

Session 6: *Gateway to maintain dialogue among countries in North-East Asia*

In North-East Asia, in addition to Japan, Republic of Korea and China as well as Russia, as emerging donors, are increasing contribution to the achievement of global development agendas including poverty reduction. However, development cooperation within North-East Asia is hampered by geopolitical challenges among those countries, as well as in relation with countries like DPRK. Nonetheless, engagement of DPRK in international forum is of interest of the countries in the North-East Asia. This session discuss on possible areas of common interest, such as environment or sustainable development, for which development cooperation with North-East Asia can be promoted. Speakers will be invited from among national experts and a Davos-style discussion panel will follow to share their views.

Session 1: Experience of North-East Asia

Development Experience of Northeast Asia and Knowledge Sharing

CHUN Seung-Hun
President
Korean Institute for Development Strategy

“Poverty reduction” is the core agenda of the global community, as was represented by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and Post-MDGs discussion. However, if we look at the features of international development from the 1960s until now, we witness that, in spite of global efforts for development cooperation, no significant economic development in the world has been witnessed except in East Asia. Stylized facts about international poverty may be summarized as follows:

- Few countries have achieved significant progress in poverty reduction.
- In Africa, in spite of enormous foreign financial assistance, poverty remained almost unchanged.
- East Asia is the only region with such progress.
- Northeast Asia is the core of the East Asian growth dynamics.
- The wave of development spreads to neighboring countries in Asia

From the above observations, we may draw some policy implications for international development as follows:

- Poverty reduction is never an easy task to be accomplished.
- Economic dynamics in Northeast Asia provide a clue for international development.
- In poverty reduction and economic development, reducing knowledge gaps among countries seems to be as important as financial assistance.

The four Northeast Asian countries show great dynamism, although their stages of development are different from one another. From the difference in their various stages of development, each country has its own strength and weakness in development cooperation. The four countries are in a position to provide practical knowledge and expertise in development cooperation with a good supplementary relationship.

- Japan possesses strength in (1) accumulated skills in development cooperation, (2) full experience of national development, and (3) financial capacity in foreign aid. Meanwhile, since Japan is already a matured economy, it may have weakness in vividness of experience in state-building and economic development.
- Korea seems to have strength in (1) vivid experience of state-building and economic development, (2) experience as an aid recipient, and (3) completed stage in industrialization, while Korea’s aid capacity is limited compared with that of Japan and China.
- China possesses strength in (1) financial capacity in foreign aid, (2) rapid industrialization and economic growth, (3) experience of transition economy, and (4) management of huge population with large territory. Meanwhile, its weakness may be found in its lack of sufficient experience in development aid, and maturity in its industrial development.
- Russia has strength in (1) management of huge territory with large population, (2) experience in assisting federal states in the past, and (3) transition economy, while it may lack in sufficient skills in formal development cooperation.

Now we are ready to explore any expected role of the Northeast Asian countries in international development cooperation. For that purpose, first, it is necessary to evaluate the performance of current international development cooperation initiated by the West-European countries.

With regard to development effectiveness of international aid, it is argued that no significant reductions of poverty in the global community are witnessed, nor does there seem to be any correlation between ODA and economic development (World Bank, Assessing Aid, 2000). In particular, “almost every African country has witnessed a systematic retrogression in capacity in the last 30 years; the majority had better capacity at independence than they now possess” (Van de Walle 2002). The fact that the Post-MDGs discussion is focused on “sustainable development” supports this argument.

The weak performance of current international development cooperation seems understandable, when we consider the position of the West-European donor countries in international development cooperation:

- In those countries, economic development had been undertaken under a completely different mode and in a completely different environment.
- They have no experience of colonial rule.
- Their culture and customs are quite different from those of the contemporary developing countries.

Considering this, the Northeast Asian countries, which all have significant advantages in development cooperation, may have some role to play in international development cooperation. In mentoring a university-preparing student, one's elder university student brother might be in a better position than one's father.

In this regard, the Northeast Asian countries are in a position to play some significant role in development cooperation as follows:

- They can provide practical experiences with regard to various development issues.
- They can help develop modern institutions under different cultural environments from their trial and error experiences.
- They can share unique experiences of transition economies.
- In particular, they can provide practical experiences of industrial development for developing countries with poor industrial bases.

The valuable development experiences and development cooperation capacity of the Northeast Asian countries need to be elaborated and shared for development effectiveness in the global community. In this regard, an “Initiative for the Northeast Asia Platform for Development Cooperation” may be proposed for more pragmatic contributions to international development cooperation. The platform can be started with missions as follows:

- Research for various development issues
- Sharing knowledge of development cooperation
- Developing the art of aid delivery
- Harmonization in development cooperation

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