
The Forum in the Context of Regional Cooperation

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The NEAEF meeting is held in Changchun again. The first meeting was held in Changchun ten years ago. It is a joyful thing that our old friends are meeting in Changchun today.

Looking back at the past ten years, we achieved many things and also have had many experiences. We remember how difficult it was to start our work. However, we started it from research and investigations. We justified our idea and planned to establish the Tumen River Development Area. This idea stimulated considerable interest among the governments concerned and the UNDP. The joint-development program among these governments was finally established under the auspices of the UNDP.

The Northeast Asia Economic Forum still maintains its NGO character. It broadens the research field, and its viewpoints are more objective. We have had a few Forum meetings that placed emphasis on the establishment of the Northeast Asian Development Bank, because we understand that the broader development of the area cannot be carried out without additional sources of finance. We are still expecting support from the governments on this issue. We proposed the basic idea of this new bank at the last Forum meeting in Tianjin. I suggest that we emphasize these ideas again at this meeting. The Forum as an NGO should propose its ideas positively. Our work is not to sit and wait for the establishment of the bank. We need to do more, and we can do more. Have we not accomplished a lot already in these years?

A shortcoming of our meeting is that we will not have a chance to visit Changbai Mountain or the Tumen River area. We should go to Siberia, the Japan Sea, and the Bo Hai Sea to have a look into the future. It is advantageous that the Forum meetings are held in different cities and in different countries. However, those people who cannot come to the meetings do not have an opportunity to visit these places.

Productivity always needs to be developed. Resources always need to be developed, too. Northeast Asia has a relatively lagging economy, but it has abundant natural resources to be developed in the future, and we need to look forward and to look more widely. We should endeavor, to the best of our ability, to pursue our dreams.