

The Anchorage Affirmation

Anchorage, Alaska, 7 March 2002

The Meeting recognizes the momentum created by the Northeast Asia Economic Forum's efforts, which began in Niigata in 1988, and which have been strengthened by annual meetings in Changchun, Tianjin, Pyongyang, Vladivostok, Yongpyeong, Niigata, Honolulu, Ulaanbaatar, Yonago, Tianjin, and now Anchorage. These efforts began in Asia, and it is fitting that our efforts have now bridged the Pacific reaching out from Asia to include the North American mainland. In this context, the meeting felt that it is critical to maintain the Forum's momentum and in this regard strongly encouraged the strengthening of its organizational structure to take it to a new level of productivity.

Energy development is vital to the well-being and prosperity of rural settlements in Alaska, Chukotka, and other parts of greater Northeast Asia, yet many regions suffer from unreliable or extremely costly sources. Such remote settlements may also suffer damage due to the production of energy or electricity from outdated and inefficient power technologies. For these reasons, it is recommended that the Northeast Asia Economic Forum work toward facilitating dialogue and cooperation among Northeast Asian countries and regions, including Alaska, to promote new and efficient energy development in stranded areas and to identify issues of mutual interest. The Northeast Asia Economic Forum can play a pivotal role in bringing together specialists in Northeast Asia to discuss ways and means for remote regions and settlements to be provided with reliable energy at reasonable prices, thus enhancing the residents' economic and social development.

The Meeting recognized the supply and use of energy resources in Northeast Asia as an excellent opportunity for furthering regional economic cooperation, including mitigation of their environmental impacts. Given the complexity of issues at the national and international levels, the Meeting suggested that the Northeast Asia Economic Forum take further steps to advance mutual understanding and encourage policy dialogue. Recognizing that the benefits of a gas pipeline would include lowered pollution, the Meeting suggested that a study be undertaken to quantify the costs and benefits, as well as those that might be produced by transnational electricity transmission lines.

The Meeting recognized that, through cooperation among Northeast Asian nations, the region can become an environmentally advanced area and in this process can strengthen relations among all Northeast Asian nations. Although the substitution of natural gas in place of oil and coal will be environmentally beneficial, and although greater energy efficiency can be achieved through

technological advances, the benefits of these changes can be realized only through effective cooperative networks across national boundaries.

The Meeting recognized that energy issues in Northeast Asia are related to issues in other sectors such as security, industrial structure, and transportation, and that these intricately intertwined issues must be understood comprehensively in order to resolve them. It is thus necessary for Northeast Asia to develop a comprehensive plan for the region as a whole, in which the individual sectors are related to each other, as is being undertaken, for example, by the National Institute for Research Advancement (NIRA).

The meeting recognized that the Asia Pacific region's epicenter for information technology advances is now located in China, Japan, and South Korea, creating a new Asian digital divide. Important trends that bode well for Northeast Asian cooperation in the IT sector are: (1) the lead in wireless communications is now held by Japan and South Korea, (2) the U.S. continues to develop expertise in technology and sustainable applications for development and business, (3) knowledge workers in China are the cheapest in Northeast Asia, and (4) the Russian Federation has sought to participate in the development of technology in Northeast Asia, and it is expected that Russia's advances in satellite technology will be of service to the region.

An Expert Working Group on Financing Infrastructure Development and the Northeast Asian Development Bank focused on the financial issues and mobilization of capital for infrastructure development, such as gas pipelines, transportation and logistics, and social infrastructure. In this context, the creation of a Northeast Asian Development Bank (NEADB) was strongly supported by the meeting. The Bank will principally be for infrastructure development, without imposing preconditions regarding political, social, and economic structure. Such a Bank would certainly be located in the Northeast Asian region, and the Forum is pleased to note that the city of Tianjin has expressed keen interest in continuing the dialogue toward the establishment of the Bank.

The Meeting warmly thanked the Institute of the North, the Alaska State Government, and the Anchorage City Administration for their hospitality and efficient organization of the meeting.