

FRAMEWORK FOR A FORUM FOR DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION BETWEEN EAST ASIA AND LATIN AMERICA

1 Global interdependence is a reality that cannot be ignored. But the global market is highly uneven in its effects and does not in itself create international cohesion. The dichotomy between the economic and political dimensions of global interdependence should be addressed. A sense of global cohesiveness and of the inter-connections between regions must be encouraged as a means to ensure that interdependence benefits all and that international peace and stability are preserved.

Rationale

2 Technology has mitigated the effects of geographic distance between East Asia and Latin America and created the opportunity to realise the full potential of closer interactions between these regions. East Asia and Latin America are comprised of mainly developing countries who share many similar concerns and problems. East Asia and Latin America are economically dynamic and are complementary to each other. The Forum will address common issues and problems and explore new avenues for cooperation. There is great scope for political, social, cultural, academic, economic and other kinds of cooperation. Closer linkages and cooperation between East Asia and Latin America will be mutually beneficial and contribute to both regional and international peace and stability.

Purpose

3 The purpose of the Forum is to promote better understanding, political and economic dialogue and cooperation in all areas so as to achieve more effective and fruitful relations and closer cooperation between the two regions. It will avoid duplication with other existing forums. It shall take a multidisciplinary approach and could involve both the public and private sectors.

Objective

4 The key objectives of the Forum are:

- To increase mutual understanding, trust, political dialogue and friendly cooperation among member states with a view to enriching and sharing experiences and developing new partnerships.
- To tap the potential of multidisciplinary cooperation, inter alia, in economics, trade investment, finance, science and technology, environment protection, culture, sport, and people-to-people exchanges.

- To expand common ground on important international political and economic issues with a view to working together in different international fora in order to safeguard our common interests.

Principles

5 The Forum should be forward looking and future oriented. It will be voluntary, informal and flexible in its working procedures. It will conduct itself in accordance with basic principles of international law, in particular:

- Respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity;
- Non-interference in each other's internal affairs;
- Equality, mutual benefit and the common goal of development;
- Respect for each other's unique cultures and social values; and
- Decision-making by consensus.

Participation

6 The Forum comprises sovereign states participating in their individual national capacities. Membership of the forum is open to all sovereign states committed to promoting better relations and linkages between East Asia and Latin America. New members shall be admitted on basis of consensus.

7 The Forum's activities and projects are limited to its members. Other sovereign states as well as international and regional organizations may participate in specific projects and activities on the basis of consensus among members.

Modalities

8 Regular meetings of Foreign Ministers are envisaged and could be held approximately every two years. The possible participation of Economic or other Ministers and the possibility of having a Summit of Leaders can be discussed by the Foreign Ministers.

9 The agenda of the Foreign Ministers' Meeting should be relevant to the concerns of both regions and decided by consensus. Senior Officials Meetings (SOM) should be held to prepare for the Foreign Ministers' Meetings. SOMs should be held at least once a year, as well as back to back with Foreign Ministers' Meetings. The Ministries of Foreign Affairs of member countries shall be the focal points for the Forum.

10 Two Coordinators, one from each region, will be appointed to provide focal points of contact in between formal meetings of officials and Ministers. The

appointments shall be on the basis of consensus within their respective regions. To ensure continuity and greater partnership, two Deputy Coordinators, who will be the future Coordinators will also be appointed. These will assume as Coordinators at the end of the Ministerial Meetings.

11 The venue of meetings should be alternate between the two regions and be decided on the basis of consensus.

12 The Forum shall endeavour to make progress incrementally, always seeking common ground and putting aside differences in order to foster understanding and cooperation, and moving at a pace comfortable to all its members.

Projects

13 To enhance substantive cooperation between East Asia and Latin America, participating countries are encouraged to submit specific projects with inter-regional scope. For the purposes of this Forum, a project is an initiative aimed at raising awareness and fostering better understanding between East Asia and Latin America that one or more countries pledge to implement within a certain period of time. At the initial stage, projects should be modest in scope and in their numbers.

14 Initiators of projects should be responsible for securing funding. Implementation of projects should be voluntary. Projects should be mutually beneficial and contribute towards advancing, the overall objectives of the Forum.

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