



Policy Dialogue on Inclusive Subregional Cooperation in East and North-east Asia for Sustainable Development

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Greetings/ Introduction

(Slide 1)

Thank you Mr. Chung Keeyong.

I am Michigami, Secretary-General of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat, TCS. It is my great honour to join this policy dialogue today. I would like to extend my sincere congratulations on the 10th anniversary of UNESCAP East and North-East Asia Office, to H.E. Mr. Ganbold.

2020 has been a year of tremendous socio-economic challenge. Global economies are shrinking. Plus, the divide between the rich and the poor will be widened. The World Bank estimated an additional 90 million people to fall into extreme poverty. The COVID-19 pandemic poses serious threats to human security. The vulnerable is most severely affected.

The world is now seeking for rapid economic recovery, which is of course necessary. But I'd like to draw your attention that our human security foundation is now undermined. So we need to re-enhance foundations for people-centred, inclusive approach on mid- to long-term strategies for achieving the sustainable development goals.

(Slide 2- Statistics of China, Japan and Korea)

As you see in the statistics, the share of CJK, China, Japan and Korea is huge. The cooperation among the three countries started in 1999. Now we have a shared commitment to resolve common transboundary challenges. TCS was also established in 2011 to facilitate both governmental and non-governmental cooperation.

The triangle scheme gradually developed into 21 ministerial meetings. Among them, today I would like to focus on three areas which will form a cornerstone of human security and sustainable development: Environment; Disaster Management; and Health.

Introduction of key areas with TCS progress in strengthening cooperation

(Slide 3- Environment)

Many countries have environmental activities at non-governmental level, such as coastal clean-up or tree-planting. And CJK Environment Ministers Meeting (TEMM) is one of the most successful and well-established schemes. It started in 1999. Last year, I attended the 21st TEMM in Japan. What's unique about TEMM is that they adopt and implement the Joint Action Plan. So this is not mere statement or declaration. And the Ministers agreed on the 8 priorities for the next Joint Action Plan, as you can see on the slide.

What also struck me is the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders in the Ministers Meeting. Business, professors and students were attending sub-forums and actively discussing their own contributions. Events, research and meetings are held throughout the year to keep the ball rolling. And we, TCS has also joined these efforts and conducted projects focusing on capacity building of teachers for environmental education.

(Slide 4- Disaster management)

Every year, the three countries experience natural disasters like typhoon, earthquake and flood. Reduction of disaster risk has been their common concern, leading to the establishment of the Ministerial Meeting in 2009. Good practices are shared in many fields. At the last Ministers Meeting, I found that China and Korea learned from Japan's rich experiences and knowledge and strengthened their own disaster management scheme.

In recent years, cooperation involves not only the central governments, but also local governments, local communities, universities and NGOs. Last year, TCS published a booklet to showcase the steady development of the past 10 years.

(Slide 5- Health)

Last but not least, the Health Ministers Meeting. This scheme began in 2007 as a joint response to pandemic flu. Since then, it has developed to address major health issues including population ageing, universal health coverage and infectious diseases.

After the breakout of COVID-19, CJK had different situations and responses, and the measures taken by the three countries attracted attention from many countries. Even under the most difficult circumstances, information exchanges among the medical experts of the 3 countries and the WHO continued. Special Video Ministers Meeting was held in May. And in July, we, the TCS and UNESCAP co-hosted a Webinar which shared the strategies and experiences of COVID-19 in CJK. We had over 9,000 viewers from over 70 countries.

Future challenges and cooperation forward

Lastly, on future challenges and cooperation. In the pandemic we reflect upon our conceptions of social and individual well-being. It also urges us to take a more

balanced and holistic approach in development. In this regard, CJK cooperation is a young and active framework and has good potential within and beyond the region.

For example, the three countries have highly sophisticated social infrastructure and technologies. The ongoing discussion on smart cities is aimed at improving the efficiency and quality of people's life. This is a necessary agenda. At the same time, we need to minimize the people who are "left behind". Policies should be inclusive of the elderly, marginalised and vulnerable population to enhance overall resilience of the region.

One example. Recently, in Japan or Korea, there are no staffs at the subway stations. If you want to buy tickets but do not know how, you cannot ask for help. Technologies made life more convenient and efficient for many, but to other people it's worse than before.

The global fight against COVID-19 is expected to continue. We are living in a very uncertain time now. Yet, building on existing foundations, trilateral cooperation will continue to expand engaging a wider range of stakeholders. TCS will do our best to support the three countries' efforts, enhance partnership with other regional and international institutions.

Thank you very much.