

Report of the Coordinators of the Fourth Meeting of Senior Officials of the Forum for East Asia – Latin America Cooperation (FEALAC SOM IV)

The Fourth Meeting of Senior Officials of the Forum for East Asia–Latin America Cooperation (FEALAC SOM IV) took place in Bogotá, Colombia, from the 26th to the 28th of November 2002. The Meeting was inaugurated by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Mrs. Carolina Barco. It was jointly chaired by the Viceminister of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Mrs. Clemencia Forero, and by the Senior Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, Mr. Lauro L. Baja, Jr.

Delegations from the 30 member countries participated in the Meeting: Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, China, Ecuador, El Salvador, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Mexico, Myanmar, New Zealand, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Uruguay, Venezuela and Vietnam. The list of delegates is attached as Annex 1.

1. Adoption of agenda

The Meeting adopted the agenda attached as Annex 2.

2. Designation of Deputy Coordinators (Article 10 of the Framework Document)

The Meeting welcomed Korea as Deputy Coordinator for East Asia. Consultations will continue on the search of a Deputy Coordinator for Latin America.

3. New applications for membership: Nicaragua and Guatemala.

The Meeting took note of the applications for membership of Nicaragua and Guatemala, which will be submitted to the process established in the Framework Document.

4. Reports of the Co-Chairs of the Working Groups.

The Meeting expressed appreciation for the efforts made by the Presidents of the Working Groups, particularly to the countries that hosted the First Meeting: Singapore (political/cultural), Japan (economic/social) and Australia (education, science and technology).

After receiving the Reports, the Meeting gave comments and guidelines for the future work of the Working Groups, which are summarized as follows:

♦ General guidelines for the Working Groups.

- ☑ Encourage the holding of the Second Meeting as early as possible in the first semester of 2003 and to announce the dates well in advance.

- ☑ Encourage the deepening of the work of the Working Groups to ensure the consolidation of the Forum.
- ☑ Emphasize the need to further involve government officials, entities and experts who handle issues dealt with in each of the Working Groups.
- ☑ Reiterate the task of each Working Group of harmonizing existing national and bilateral projects to enhance the cooperation framework.
- ☑ Recommend to the Chairmen of the Working Groups to lead a project so that the Fifth Senior Officials' Meeting may put into consideration at least six concrete and viable interregional projects.

◆ **Specific guidelines for each Working Group.**

(1) Political and Cultural.

- ☑ Give priority to the forum for young parliamentarians and the Electronic Network of the Centers of Studies in the Member Countries, as viable initiatives that could produce a significant impact on the strengthening of relations between the two regions, highlighting the project of Chile proposing a Network for Academic Centers and Singapore's Cultural and Journalists' Visit Programs.

(2) Economic and Social.

- ☑ Appreciation to the Government of Japan for the establishment of the Group of Experts which has facilitated the tasks of this Working Group.
- ☑ Priority was given to projects that contribute to the common goal of poverty reduction. Those related to Entrepreneurship and Micro-, Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs), were underscored as promising areas of cooperation. Peru presented a project proposal in this regard. Said priorities and the progress achieved by this Working Group shall be the basis for the Meeting in Tokyo.
- ☑ Recognize the importance of interregional trade, which exhibits very low levels compared to its existing potential, as well as an imbalance. This issue serves as a valuable instrument for the deepening of the relations between the two regions. In this regard, positive acknowledgment was given to the study undertaken by Singapore on the obstacles to East Asia-Latin America trade.

(3) Education, Science and Technology.

- ☑ Underscore the importance of implementing the initiative of linking the existing electronic web pages of the member countries on these areas so as to connect the researchers and research centers of both regions, while seeking to identify search engines that would allow the use of a common language for the classification of materials.

- ☑ In that regard, the web page presented by Australia (www.dest.gov.au/fealac) at this Meeting was welcomed and the member countries were encouraged to link their web pages on education, science and technology to this web page.
- ☑ Recognize the importance of the projects related to the environment and to disaster relief and prevention, such as the *El Niño* Phenomenon and Clean Air.
- ☑ Encourage the participation of the member countries in the Fifth Meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean Network of Asia-Pacific Centers, which will be held in Buenos Aires on 12-13 December 2002.

5. Evaluation of National Projects.

The Meeting expressed its appreciation for the large number of existing national projects which have already generated the dynamics of better knowledge between the two regions, thanks to a more free-flowing exchange of visits of, *inter alia*, government officials, researchers, academicians, journalists and youth.

The need for improved coordination among national projects, as well as with those of the Working Groups was underscored, in order to avoid duplication of efforts and to facilitate the assignment of priorities to the projects. For this purpose, Colombia, in its capacity as Coordinator, offered to submit a matrix of national projects, both accomplished or ongoing, as well as those being considered by the Working Groups, with a clear distinction between national and interregional projects.

6. Initiatives to strengthen FEALAC

The Senior Officials reiterated the importance of the sustainability of the Forum, indicating that this kind of initiatives requires time to mature. They identified the need to improve its coherence, efficiency and focus, which would thus produce a positive impact on its success and long-term viability.

To address this need, the Coordinators shall promote a Core Group-style consultations and meetings that allow for deliberations, with the active participation of all members, including the Regional Coordinators, Deputy Coordinators and Chairmen of the Working Groups.

The results of these exchanges of views will be considered in the Fifth Senior Officials' Meeting in Manila, prior to which a working meeting on the strengthening of FEALAC is envisaged.

To facilitate this task, the Regional Coordinators shall identify and make known to the other members the FEALAC National Focal Points or National Coordinators, encouraging more free-flowing interaction, with the use of the information technology.

An extensive exchange of ideas took place in the Meeting. The exercise will be of great use to the deliberations on FEALAC. Among the more important proposals are the following:

- ☑ To encourage the participation of academe and the private sector.
- ☑ To promote the creation of a Business Council.
- ☑ To work on the basis of the Forum's principles of equality, mutual benefit and common development.
- ☑ To identify tools that would contribute to a better knowledge of the culture and history of both regions.
- ☑ To promote the use of technology.
- ☑ To promote technical cooperation.
- ☑ To benefit from the experiences of the financial crises in both regions.
- ☑ To seek financing for cooperation projects.
- ☑ To make further use of the leadership of the Coordinators.
- ☑ To encourage a balanced participation of both regions.
- ☑ To establish relations with international organizations and international financial bodies.
- ☑ To emphasize the prioritization of projects.
- ☑ To take advantage of the experience already gained in the Forum.
- ☑ To improve the flow of communication between the National Focal Points / National Coordinators of the Forum.

7. Next SOM (SOM V) and Second Meeting of the FEALAC Foreign Ministers (FMM II) in the Philippines.

The Meeting took note of the great interest to establish an agenda that is as substantive as possible for the Second Ministerial Meeting and indicated the need to hold the Fifth Senior Officials Meeting in the middle of 2003 to decide on the issues for dialogue and the projects for cooperation that could be dealt by the Second Foreign Ministers Meeting, as well as the specific date for this meeting.

♦ Consultations on the agenda to be discussed and release of ministerial declarations in the FMM II.

The Coordinators shall consult with the countries of their respective regions the international issues on which there could be consensus to give substance to the declarations of the Second Ministerial Meeting.

8. Other matters.

No other matter was discussed.

9. Consideration of the Report of the Coordinators.

The Meeting received the present Report of the Coordinators