

CO-CHAIRS' STATEMENT

Forum for East Asia -Latin America Cooperation (FEALAC) Political-Cultural Working Group Meeting

1-3 May 2002, Singapore

1. The first meeting of the Political/Cultural Working Group of the Forum for East Asia-Latin America Cooperation was held in Singapore from 1-3 May 2002. The meeting was convened pursuant to the decision taken at the First Ministerial Meeting of the Forum for East Asia - Latin America Cooperation (FEALAC) in Santiago, Chile 29-30 March 2001. The Meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Lim Thuan Kuan, Director of Policy, Planning and Analysis Directorate IV, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Asia Pacific Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Chile.

2. The Meeting was attended by delegates from Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mexico, Myanmar, New Zealand, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Uruguay, Venezuela and Vietnam.

Existing Cooperation

3. The meeting had a substantive exchange on the existing political and cultural cooperation between Latin America and East Asia. It was noted that there was already some cooperation taking place in the political and cultural areas. In the political area, there were ongoing programmes between the two regions such as symposiums involving young leaders, study attachment programmes and linkages among some universities. In the area of culture, there were programmes such as Journalists' Visit Programmes and exchanges of cultural exhibitions between the two regions. A non-exhaustive list of the existing programmes or projects is at Annex A.

Future Directions

4. The meeting discussed the future directions in the area of political and cultural cooperation. It was noted that the majority of ongoing cooperation in these two areas were focused largely on bilateral programmes by individual countries. The meeting was of the view that there was a need to synergise, synchronise and harmonise these existing bilateral projects in order to encourage a systematic, cohesive and focused forum-wide co-operation. The meeting also noted the need for more exchanges between the two regions to foster greater cooperation and mutual understanding. It was also noted that the FEALAC mechanism had given the opportunity for government officials to meet and interact with each other. The meeting was of the view that there was a need to go beyond this to include exchanges between other sectors of society, such as academia, civil society, non-governmental organizations and regional and international organizations, such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and regional United Nations organizations such as the Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

(ESCAP). The meeting noted that there was a lack of public awareness about East Asia and Latin American in general and the FEALAC process in particular. As such, there was a need to disseminate information in order to create awareness and to sustain the momentum of the FEALAC process.

5. There was also discussion on some issues which may need to be addressed in future to achieve the objectives of creating increased mutual understanding a foundation dedicated to forging closer political, cultural and people to people linkages between both regions was discussed. During the meeting, some delegates also mentioned the need for a Secretariat sometime in the longer term to coordinate the activities do the forum. The meeting also discussed the aspect of funding for activities related to the forum, and was of the view that this was an area that needed to be further addressed.

6. Finally, the meeting noted that there would be inevitable overlaps in the areas covered by this Working Group with the work by the other two Working Groups on Economy/Society and Education/Science and Technology. It was noted that in a globalised world, issues relating to political and cultural cooperation would cross-cut with issues relating to economics, social, education etc. It was noted that there might be duplication of recommendations by the three Working Groups. This is an issue that would have to be eventually addressed at the Senior Officials' Meeting.

Proposed Projects/Possible Areas of Cooperation

7. Pursuant to the recognition that there were many national projects and that there was scope for greater synergy to maximize benefits for increased cooperation, the meeting felt that there was merit in exchanging information on the various national projects. This would allow FEALAC members to better make use of the potential opportunities arising from national projects. In this connection, the Co-Chairs requested that each member country submit an overview of their existing national projects in these two areas within the next month. The East Asian countries could submit this to Singapore via email to Maureen_poh@mfa.gov.sg, and the Latin American countries could do likewise to Chile to dirapac1@mirel.cl.

8. The meeting also noted that there was already some cooperation between the two regions in international for a such as the UN and UNESCO and mechanisms like the Rio Group.

9. The meeting was informed there was ongoing cooperation in the preservation and protection of the rich cultural heritage of countries in East Asia and Latin America. This was an area which the two regions could further cooperate.

10. The meeting also noted that there was already some cooperation between countries in East Asia and Latin America on transnational issues such as transnational crime and suggested that cooperation on these issues could be further explored.

11. The meeting was of the view that apart from national projects, there should be some forum-wide projects involving all the members of FEALAC. The meeting discussed several ideas which could be developed into possible FEALAC-wide projects in the short to medium term. These included, but were not limited, to the following:

- (a) A Young Parliamentarians' or Young Leaders' Forum that could promote political cooperation between the two regions;
- (b) Exchanges between think tanks and academic institutions of East Asia and Latin American. This could include the creation of a network of study centres throughout East Asia and Latin America through the use of information technology;
- (c) The use of public television to facilitate and to expand the knowledge of member countries of each other;
- (d) The creation of national web pages on FEALAC with a view to linking them up to create a main FEALAC-wide home page in future. The national web pages could provide links to the relevant government websites;
- (e) Arrangements for the facilitation of traveling Cultural Exhibitions from East Asia to Latin America and vice versa;
- (f) A Cultural Festival which could be tied back-to-back with the FEALAC Ministerial Meeting;
- (g) The identification of focal points of contact among cultural bodies in member countries in order to improve the coordination of cultural activities between the East Asian and Latin American regions and to facilitate cultural cooperation;
- (h) Sports Exchanges between East Asia and Latin America.

12. The various projects will be further discussed at the second meeting of the Working Group on Political/Cultural Cooperation to be held in Chile in 2003 with a view to finalizing a recommendation to the Manila SOM and Ministerial in 2003. In the meantime, members who had proposed projects were encouraged to further flesh out the details.

Next Senior Officials' Meeting in Colombia

13. The meeting was informed by the Colombian delegation that the Fourth SOM will be held from 28-30 October 2002 at a venue to be decided. The preliminary report of the Co-Chairs of the first Working Group Political/Cultural Cooperation will be presented at this SOM.

14. The Meeting expressed its appreciation to the Co-Chairs of the Working Group Meeting, Singapore and Chile.

15. The Meeting expressed its appreciation to the Government of Singapore for the excellent arrangements and warm hospitality accorded to all delegations.

<ANNEX A>

EXISTING PROGRAMMES OR PROJECTS BETWEEN EAST ASIAN AND
LATIN AMERICAN FEALAC MEMBERS IN THE POLITICAL AND CULTURAL
AREAS

Political

“Diplomatic Academy of Chile and East Asia Linkages” (Chile)

Visiting Programme for Latin American Diplomats (China)

Centre for Studies on Asia and Oceania (Cuba)

Human Resource Development Scholarships (Cuba)

Japanese Language Programme for Foreign Service Officers from East Asia and Latin
America (Japan)

East Asia-Latin America Young Leaders Symposium (Japan)

Opinion Leaders’ from Latin America Invitation Programme (Japan)

Asia 2000 Foundation - Political area (New Zealand)

Latin American Strategy - Political area (New Zealand)

Cultural

Visiting Programme for Latin American and East Asian Journalists (Australia)

Visiting Programme for Latin American Journalists (China)

China-Brazil Art Exhibition
China-Peru Art Exhibition

Young Leaders’ from East Asia and Latin America Invitation Programme (Japan)

Sending Lecturers to Latin America Programme (Japan)

Invitation to Young Opinion Leaders/Journalists in Latin America (Korea)

Asia 2000 Foundation - Cultural area (New Zealand)

Latin American Strategy - Cultural area (New Zealand)

The Philippines Cultural Exchange in Literary Work (Philippines)

Latin America’s Journalists’ Visit Programme (Singapore)