

FORUM FOR EAST ASIA- LATIN AMERICA COOPERATION
POLITICAL, CULTURAL AND EDUCATION
WORKING GROUP MEETING,
9-10 SEPTEMBER 2004, SINGAPORE

CO-CHAIRS' STATEMENT

1. The third meeting of the Political, Cultural and Education Working Group of the Forum for East Asia-Latin America Cooperation (FEALAC) was held in Singapore from 9-10 September 2004. The meeting was held to further the work of the first and second Working Group meetings in Singapore from 1-3 May 2002 and in Chile from 8-9 May 2003, respectively. The meeting was co-chaired by Mr Wong Kwok Pun, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore and Ms Lina Maria Ibanez, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia.

2. The meeting was attended by delegates from Australia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mexico, Myanmar, New Zealand, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The list of delegates is at Annex A.

3. Upon the adoption of the Agenda (Annex B), the delegations comprehensively reviewed the various projects in the fields of politics, culture and education between East Asia and Latin America. National reports and statements were presented by the following countries, Australia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Myanmar, New Zealand, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

4. In considering the national reports, the meeting acknowledged that there was a deep interest in building closer ties between East Asia and Latin America. The substantive bilateral cooperation taking place across the political, cultural and education spheres signalled that trans-Pacific relations had strengthened significantly between the two regions since FEALAC's inception. The meeting also recognised the importance of focussing on building mechanisms to raise mutual awareness and understanding, which would promote closer cooperation in politics, economics and society.

5. The Meeting noted that since this was the first meeting since the 2nd FEALAC Foreign Ministers Meeting (FMM II) in Manila in January 2004, it was important to explore ways in which FEALAC could build upon the mandate of FMM II. The meeting acknowledged that one way of doing so was to take into consideration the possibility of stepping up cooperation in fields such as education and combating transnational crimes like drug-trafficking and terrorism. The meeting welcomed Thailand's proposal for a "Workshop for Drug Cooperation for FEALAC countries" and urged maximum participation in the Workshop. The meeting also welcomed Indonesia's offer to all FEALAC members to participate in activities at the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation. The meeting agreed that the two principles of "shared responsibility" and "solidarity" could be the guide for cooperation in these fields. The meeting noted the views of Brazil and New Zealand that FEALAC's activities in this field should add value and not duplicate existing cooperation in other fora. The meeting agreed that member countries could send their views and comments

on their areas of interest in these fields to Colombia, to help Colombia to design project proposals. The meeting also noted that transnational issues had wide-ranging implications and should be given more consideration and possibly discussed at the 7th Senior Officials Meeting. The meeting considered how inter-regional awareness could be expanded through exchange programmes between East Asian and Latin American diplomatic training institutions as well as their judiciaries.

6. The meeting recognised the value of national projects in strengthening linkages between East Asia and Latin America. The meeting also emphasised that it was important to develop and implement viable Forum-wide projects as these projects contribute to the strengthening of the Forum as a whole and move the FEALAC process forward. The following decisions were made to the following ongoing projects which had FEALAC-wide coverage:

- 1) Report on Political and Cultural Linkages between East Asia and Latin America: The meeting commended Paraguay and New Zealand for their efforts in preparing the report on Political and Cultural Linkages between East Asia and Latin America. It was a useful record of past and ongoing cooperation between the two regions, and would help raise awareness of the rapidly-growing trans-Pacific cooperation. The meeting agreed that FEALAC countries would send updates and comments on the report to New Zealand or Paraguay by end-October 2004.
- 2) FEALAC Young Parliamentarians Forum (YPF): The meeting welcomed Singapore's plan to host the YPF, which was endorsed at FMM II, some time in the third quarter of 2005. It was agreed that the respective countries could provide the relevant contact points two weeks from the conclusion of the Working Group meeting so that the appropriate channel from sending invitations could be identified. Singapore expressed the hope that the appropriate representatives to the YPF could be identified by end-2004.
- 3) Young Leaders Symposium: The meeting welcomed the continuation of Japan's Young Leaders Symposium.
- 4) The meeting noted the 8th Forum for Korea-Latin America and the Caribbean Cooperation.

7. The meeting acknowledged that cultural cooperation was important for increasing understanding and awareness between East Asia and Latin America, and welcomed the cultural initiatives proposed by Malaysia and China. The meeting noted that as governments could not always take the lead in fostering greater cultural cooperation, efforts to increase the public-business sector partnership could be explored. To increase synergies and to optimise resources, the meeting encouraged other FEALAC countries to jointly participate in national projects such as Singapore's FEALAC Journalist Visit Programme, in which Thailand, China, Australia had also taken part in.

8. The meeting noted that this was the first time that Education issues were discussed as part of the Political and Cultural Working Group since it was transferred from the Science and Technology Working Group at the 2nd FEALAC Foreign Ministers Meeting in Manila in January 2004. The meeting welcomed the continued development of the FEALAC Academic Network (FAN) which harnessed the use of information technology to bridge the knowledge gap between East Asia and Latin

America. The meeting suggested that FAN link up with ongoing projects like the Philippine Consortium for Latin American studies (PACLAS) to better synergise resources and facilitate information exchange. The meeting welcomed Thailand's proposals in education - the Fellowship Arrangements for FEALAC Member Countries and Staff and the Student Exchange Programs between Latin American Tertiary Institutions and Burapha University.

9. The delegation of Japan informed the meeting that the next Economy and Society Working Group Meeting could be held in November 2004 in Buenos Aires. The delegation of Costa Rica and Thailand informed the meeting that the next Science and Technology Working Group Meeting could be held in Costa Rica in December 2004. The 4th Political, Cultural and Education Working Group Meeting will be held in Bogota, Colombia at a date to be determined.

10. The meeting condemned the bombing incident of 9 September 2004 in Jakarta. They reiterated their shared concern over terrorism. Recalling the Manila Plan of Action, all delegates pledged to work together in addressing security challenges and combating terrorism. The participants expressed their deepest sympathy and condolence to the families of the victims of the bombing.

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

<Annex B>

3RD FEALAC POLITICAL, CULTURAL AND EDUCATION
WORKING GROUP MEETING, 9- 10 SEPTEMBER 2004

PROPOSED AGENDA

- (1) Adoption of Agenda
- (2) Discussions on Cooperation including the State of Cooperation in the following:
 - (a) Politics
 - (b) Culture
 - (c) Education
- (3) Discussion on Building upon the Mandate of the 2nd FEALAC Foreign Ministers Meeting (FMM II)
- (4) Discussion on Future Directions
- (5) Any Other Matters
- (6) Consideration of the Statement of the Co-Chairs of the 3rd Political, Cultural and Education Working Group Meeting.