

## **Model ASEM 2008 (24-27 September 2008, Beijing, P.R. China)**

### **Chairman's Statement**

The seventh Model Asia-Europe Meeting was held in Beijing on 24-27 September 2008. The Meeting was attended by students and young people from across Europe and Asia who assumed roles as Heads of State and Government from Asian and European nations. The Meeting was co-organized by the All-China Youth Federation and the Asia-Europe Foundation in partnership with the ASEF University Alumni Network.

The Meeting was guided by the overarching theme of "Vision and Action: Towards a Win-Win Solution". Discussions were divided into political, economic and cultural pillars and focused on the idea of sustainable development. The Meeting was chaired by the delegation representing the People's Republic of China.

### **Responding to Non-Traditional Security Threats**

1. Leaders highlighted the need for intensified cooperation between ASEM countries in light of the nature of security threats faced by their nations and the international community as a whole. The Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to support policies which counteract existing and emerging global security threats, in accordance with international law, such as climate change, natural disasters, nuclear proliferation, pandemics, piracy, poverty and terrorism. Leaders agreed upon deepening their coordination and cooperation on these issues within ASEM.

2. Leaders strongly condemned the recent terrorist attack in Islamabad, Pakistan and expressed their condolences to the nations and families affected by this incident. The Leaders reaffirmed their determination to fight terrorism, which they agreed contravened the values of humanity. It was noted that addressing the root causes of terrorism, such as poverty, lack of access to education and inadequate social services, was crucial if an appropriate and meaningful response was to be found. Policies and programmes that provide social protection and development opportunities to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in society were considered priorities in terms of sustaining and enhancing regional and international peace and stability.

3. Leaders emphasized that terrorism should not be associated with any particular religion, nationality, race, gender or ethnic group. Leaders condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purpose.

4. Leaders attached great importance to co-operation on counter-terrorism within the framework of the United Nations (UN). They committed to work together to bring a swift conclusion to the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism at the UN.

5. Leaders agreed to enhance cooperation between different law enforcement agencies of ASEM member countries in order to better share information and respond to international security issues such as human trafficking, illegal immigration, terrorism and transnational crime.

6. Leaders expressed their belief that measures to counteract terrorism needed to be more holistic by enhancing the role played by civil society organizations in the fight against terrorism. Recognizing the importance of interfaith and intra-faith dialogue in addressing root causes of terrorism, Leaders highlighted the need to foster and encourage dialogue between different cultures and religions in order to promote harmony and respect. In this respect, Leaders welcomed the success of the Interfaith Dialogue initiative within ASEM and emphasized the need for more cooperation and initiatives in this field. The inauguration of an Inter-Faith Harmony was proposed.

### **International Financial Markets**

7. Leaders had a comprehensive discussion on global and regional economic and financial developments in light of the recent instability of world financial markets. The globalization of capital meant that the economies of all ASEM countries would face significant challenges in the short-term. It was agreed that robust and coordinated policy responses at both the domestic and international level are required if the consequences of economic slowdown and tightened credit conditions were to be successfully managed.

8. Given the severity of the current situation, Leaders agreed that measures to better reform and regulate international financial markets needed to be urgently introduced in order to mitigate against short-term economic downsides and to guard against future turbulence. It was agreed that these reforms should take place within the existing international financial architecture - principally the International Monetary Fund and Financial Stability Forum - rather than independently of it. Leaders called on those attending the forthcoming ASEM 7 meeting to make a clear statement on their determination to bolster macroeconomic surveillance, improve international accounting standards and foster a more responsible global market economy. It was agreed that the policy proposals outlined in the Chairman's Statement from the June 2008 ASEM Finance Ministers' Meeting needed to be strengthened in light of recent developments.

9. Leaders stressed that the solution to current difficulties was not to succumb to the political temptation of economic protectionism. It was noted that globalization had brought prosperity and improved living standards to hundreds of millions of people across Europe and Asia over recent decades. In that context, representatives underscored their commitment to enhance trade and increase investment flows in all areas between Asia and Europe.

10. Leaders agreed that Small Medium Enterprises should be involved in the

Asia-Europe Business Forum and that an ASEM Business Advisory Council should be established. It was noted that the ASEM Business Advisory Council will address the ASEM Financial Ministers' Meeting of the concerns, recommendations and priorities of the business community in Asia and Europe. In order to help companies in ASEM countries invest in other ASEM countries, the establishment of a comprehensive database on market access was agreed.

## **Climate Change and Natural Disasters**

11. Leaders welcomed the adoption of the Bali Roadmap and reaffirmed their determination to work together to build a post-2012 international agreement on carbon emissions at the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference (UNCCC) in Copenhagen. The principle of common but differentiated responsibility was reaffirmed. Leaders stressed that it was important to not lose sight of the environmental agenda, despite the current economic difficulties, and that it was the responsibility of all ASEM countries to show leadership on this issue. Tackling the challenges posed by climate change was a generational struggle and vital to the long-term, sustainable development of all countries. It was recognized that member countries stood to economically benefit in the long-term if they took timely actions on climate change.

12. Leaders agreed that the existing ASEM *Declaration on Climate Change* should be reviewed, updated and enhanced to better address the threats that climate change poses to the world as well as adding more targets and concrete proposals to it.

13. Leaders made clear that a potentially rich source of future ASEM collaboration was the sharing of knowledge and technology in pursuit of the aim of promoting alternative energies and low carbon development. It was noted that a number of developed countries possess the technology and expertise that would be valuable in helping developing countries make the transition to sustainable, low-carbon development. Although keen to not duplicate existing mechanisms or prejudge the conclusions of the next UNCCC, representatives agreed that ASEM should work to establish an informal and voluntary regime to foster collaboration between Europe and Asia on climate change. It was agreed that a group of experts from member countries should meet to discuss the practicalities of technology transfer, including the issue of intellectual property rights, and to identify what areas of technical collaboration will be most fruitful. It was suggested that this might eventually take the form of joint research institute.

14. Leaders expressed concern about the numbers of natural disasters that have affected their countries since the last ASEM and agreed on the need to strengthen resources and improve response coordination. In this regard, Leaders agreed to explore the possibility of establishing an ASEM Trust Fund for natural disaster management relief.

## **Food Security**

15. Leaders held a wide-ranging discussion on the topic of food security in a year in which the populations of all ASEM member countries have been adversely affected by the rising costs of basic foodstuffs. A coordinated response was required in light of the trans-national nature of the problem and its importance in tackling global poverty and achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals. It was noted that the problem, for many countries, was not simply one of production but also of developing adequate mechanisms for food distribution. It was further noted that the solution was to encourage self-sufficiency through improved technology and better use of land rather than establishing a relationship of aid and dependency.

16. Leaders agreed to call a Forum on Food Security that would explore, in particular, establishing an ASEM Trust Fund that would offer financial resources to countries struggling to deal with future inflationary pressures on food costs. The Fund would provide the means to research improvements in food quality and production. The Forum would also discuss mechanisms through which technical collaboration between member countries in areas of agricultural production and food distribution could be secured.

17. Leaders agreed to initiate an annual ASEM Agriculture Ministers' Meeting in order to promote sustainable agriculture and share expertise, experiences and ideas on agricultural science and technology.

18. Leaders agreed that food safety was a very important issue and noted that international regulation through the World Health Organization and SELAMAT needed to be enhanced to ensure rigorous food standards were maintained. It was noted that any steps in this direction must take into account the sensitivities of particular countries, e.g. those that use halal foods.

## **Cultural Synergies**

19. Leaders noted the importance of member countries continuing their commitments to promoting human rights in Europe and Asia.

20. Leaders recognized the importance of education in the long-term development of the cultural and economic spheres of both regions. They proposed to strengthen existing exchange programmes, such as ASEM DUO, by better promotion, giving them wider recognition and broadening their scope. To enhance mutual understanding between their cultures they also agreed to expand this framework to include researchers and teachers.

21. Leaders called for the creation of a pan-Asian version of the ERASMUS student exchange programme. This programme would cooperate with the European Union's ERASMUS programme internationally in the same way as the programme works

continentally. Special attention should be given to mutual recognition of university courses and credits when the details of this programme are worked out.

22. Leaders agreed to support the preservation and promotion of diversity, traditions and cultural heritage. They stressed the potential of eco-tourism as a vehicle for better understanding between cultures whilst preserving existing customs. Taking into consideration the ecological balance, the concept of eco-tourism demonstrated the potential synergies between tradition and sustainability.

### **Guiding ASEM to the Future**

23. Leaders decided to establish a professional and permanent Secretariat for ASEM. The Secretariat will not change the informal nature of summit discussions and ministerial meetings but it will provide valuable assistance in preparing meetings, facilitating cooperation, working as an institutional memory and helping to make ASEM more visible. Leaders expressed appreciation to the Republic of the Philippines for their willingness to base the ASEM Secretariat in Manila.

24. Recognizing that many political, economic and cultural issues are multi-faceted in nature, Leaders decided to adopt a cross-pillar approach in future ASEM discussions. ASEM discussions will therefore not necessarily take place under the three pillars and will take account of particular cross-cutting issues, such as climate change. Leaders also stressed the importance of enhancing issue-based leadership.

25. Leaders agreed that member countries should do more to promote the visibility of ASEM. It was agreed that ASEM should be promoted on Foreign Ministry websites and that other types of advocacy and awareness raising, particularly amongst civil servants, was needed.

Beijing, People's Republic of China  
26 September 2008