

ASEAN to deepen East Asia Integration

Written by Administrator
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SIEM REAP, 16 June 2016 – The 14th East Asia Forum (EAF) under the theme “Deepening East Asia Integration towards East Asia Economic Community” was held on 9-10 June in Siem Reap, Kingdom of Cambodia.

The forum was graced by H.E Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, Minister Delegate Attached to Prime Minister of Cambodia; H.E Mr. Kim Hyung-zhin, Deputy Minister for Political Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea; and Mr. Bun Tharith, Deputy Governor of Siem Reap.

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The key objectives of this 14th EAF are to maintain the important role of the EAF, which has served as a useful channel to exchange views and perspectives and to suggest constructive ideas and recommendations on: 1) maintaining the momentum of East Asia regional cooperation; 2) fostering an East Asian regional identity; and 3) implementing the vision of realising an East Asia Economic Community by 2020.

In his keynote address, Dr. Kao Kim Hourn underlined the significance of the East Asia community building process, which not only requires the involvement of the governments but also active engagement beyond business sector, academic and think-tanks to build trust and confidence for the mutual interest of the ASEAN Plus Three countries. He added that strengthening the connectivity among and between the ASEAN Plus Three countries is one of the major areas of cooperation in deepening East Asia integration. To achieve an East Asia Economic Community in 2020, there is a necessity for ASEAN Plus Three Countries, among others, to concretize its efforts with political commitment, enhance consultation, and undertake comprehensive approach in addressing the challenges. These actions will lay a strong foundation for ASEAN Plus Three cooperation towards an East Asia Economic Community in 2020.

Mr. Kim Hyung-zhin highlighted the need to undertake a step-by-step and sustainable approach to realise the vision of building an East Asia Community. He further underscored that the East Asia region is actively carrying out various experiments to build an East Asia Economic Community. Such experiments encompass bilateral Free Trade Agreements, Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank and negotiations for establishing large-scale trade economic blocs such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

The participants at the Forum have extensively focused their discussions on three topics which are reflections on Role and Achievements of the East Asia Forum towards East Asia community-building; role of Private Sector in East Asia Economic Community-building; and enhancing People-to-People Connectivity in Fostering a Stronger Sense of Shared Culture and Economic Integration in East Asia.

The two-day Forum was organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia in collaboration with the ASEAN Plus Three countries and the ASEAN Secretariat, especially with the support from the Republic of Korea. It was attended by representatives from government, academic and business circle from the ASEAN Plus Three countries and the ASEAN Secretariat.

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