

Outline of the Concluding Session

In the first half of the concluding session, reports were presented about the content of each panel and meeting of experts. Each coordinator talked about which points had been focused upon in the discussion and touched upon the background to and problems relating to the current status of discussions, while also consolidating the common perceptions and areas of disagreement that arose.

In the latter half, one panelist each from China, Mongolia, the ROK, Russia and Japan evaluated the whole conference and indicated the important points raised with regard to the themes that were discussed, as well as providing additional information from the standpoints of each country.

The evaluation of the whole conference was positive in general. There was high praise for the broadening in the range of participants, as well as the increase in numbers. The increase in participants may be a sign that many people have acknowledged the significance of this conference.

Prof. Min Shi, Director of Asia-Africa Development Research Institute of Development Research Center of State Council of the PRC, pointed out that the content of discussions had become more profound. Mr. Sukhbataar Batbold, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, asserted his intention to support the conference as a representative of the Mongolian government.

With regard to the evaluations of each topic, many panelists emphasized the importance of cooperation in the fields of transportation and energy. The opinion was also expressed that efforts should continue to deepen discussions on the other themes raised at this year's conference, i.e. IT, the environment, development finance, regional cooperation, etc., and to attain concrete achievements.

From the perspective of how to promote cooperation across the board, Prof. Shi expressed the opinion that the participation of government think tanks in each country in the Northeast Asian economic cooperation process should be sought. Mr. Sang-Ki Chung, Minister-Counsellor of Embassy of the ROK in Japan, took the view that efforts should be devoted to cooperation in the field of soft

infrastructure.

Furthermore, in introducing the basic ethos of Mongolia's diplomatic policy, Mr. Batbold, Vice-Minister of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, pointed out the importance of the Tumen River Area Development Programme. In particular, he emphasized the link between the development of Eastern Mongolia and the TRADP. Mr. Chung politely explained that the issue of notation of the Japan Sea / East Sea had been an obstacle to the ROK government's participation in the Economic Conference for the past two years. Based on an analysis of the situation surrounding the Russian economy, both domestically and externally, Dr. Victor Ishaev, Governor of Khabarovsk Territory, explained that the economy of the Russian Far East is in good condition. Moreover, he forecast that, as a result of the improvement in the investment environment in the Russian Far East, investment activities would be stimulated and economic exchange with the whole of Northeast Asia promoted.

Mr. Ikuo Hirayama, Governor of Niigata Prefecture and one of the organizers of the conference, stated that it is necessary to explain the *Vision for the Northeast Asia Transportation Corridors*, one of the achievements of this year's conference, to the governments of related countries and receive their support, and declared his readiness to explain the vision himself.

It was planned to open up the discussion to comments from the floor, including opinions on the draft resolution, after the speeches by each panelist, but due in part to inefficient time management by the organizers, there were hardly any comments from the floor and it was not possible for discussion to take place. As a result, the points of discussion in the concluding session and the results of discussions were not clarified. This does not result only from the way of conducting the concluding session, but also from the composition of the whole Economic Conference and the concluding session's position therein. This is an area that requires some review prior to the next conference.

[Hirofumi Arai, Researcher, Research Division, ERINA]