

Speech of Prime Minister of Japan, H.E. Mr. Yukio Hatoyama

**International Symposium on 'East Asia Beyond the Global Economic Crisis'
Grand Prince Hotel Akasaka, Tokyo, Japan, December 1st, 2009**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Good afternoon.

I would like to extend my congratulations of a successful opening of the International Symposium on 'East Asia Beyond the Global Economic Crisis' by IDE-JETRO and ERIA with the great attendance here.

It has only been less than two years since ERIA was established but we have the honorable presence of His Excellency Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, Secretary-General of ASEAN. This is a wonderful leadership by Dr. Surin who has been a keen supporter of ERIA. With his excellent support, ERIA has been able to operate actively and successfully that we are able to hold this wonderful International Symposium in Japan. It is indeed a great pleasure for me personally. This is because since even before I became the Prime Minister of Japan, I have been advocating for an East Asian Community initiative with strong aspiration to build an East Asian Community. I thought that there was a shared aspiration of all the people to build this East Asian Community in this region.

You may wonder why this particular Symposium is being held in Japan. Dr. Surin once told us that the activities of ERIA have gradually been understood in other countries except for Japan. It seems that Japan is lagging behind compared to other countries in understanding ERIA's activities. I really hope that you will understand the significant reason why this Symposium is held in Japan, and convey the message of the significance of this Symposium to the region.

As human beings on earth, we are equipped with the ability to have the initiative or to conceptualize the direction. We are still in the realm of dream to have an East Asian Community but it is very important to build and embrace this dream. There are differences of views in some countries. Some are wealthy and some are not necessarily wealthy, so all the things on earth are not on the same level. But by building cooperation among each other, each entity and party on earth can benefit from such joint efforts.

I clearly believe that it is tremendously important to strengthen such ties and bonds in trade, economy, finance, computer, energy, science & technology, disaster mitigation and prevention, environment, medical services, diseases, education and culture. It is important to enhance cooperation in all these possible sectors to benefit all the people not just in the region but people all over the world.

His Excellency Dr. Surin has to go through much effort to create ERIA's activities that will be of key interest to the people. We share the opportunity to strengthen ERIA's activities in the world and its contribution to the world. All the world communities are facing with difficulties. These are not good news but because of the difficulties that we face on a global basis, the driving force of Asia and its growth would be a key driving force for us to be able to demonstrate our capability that will forge a path and to reach out and overcome any difficulty that we are facing.

I hope the East Asian Community initiative would become a much closer idea to us, and not only stay as a dream. I would like to extend my official appreciation to all the efforts that have been undertaken. I hope that this Symposium would be a significant collective one with the strong leadership of His Excellency Dr. Surin.

Congratulations to the opening of this Symposium.