

**Remarks at the International Forum for Trilateral
Cooperation 2021**

27 April 2021, Seoul, Korea

Thank you for your warm introduction.

Hon. Michigami Hisashi, Secretary-General of the
Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat,

Vice Minister Choi Jong-moon, Ministry of Foreign
Affairs of the ROK,

Ambassador Aiboshi Koichi of Japan to the ROK,

Ambassador Xing Haiming of China to the ROK,

Hon. Kim Sung-hwan, Former Minister of the Foreign
Affairs of the ROK,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies & Gentlemen,

I extend my sincere congratulations on the 10th
anniversary of establishment of the Trilateral Cooperation
Secretariat (TCS) this year.

And it is my privilege to deliver these remarks at such an important juncture not only for our three nations, but for Asia and the wider world as well. We are living in unprecedented times, but we also have big opportunities.

Indeed, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues into its second year, we must elevate cooperation and partnership in order to seize the present moment to create more resilient, sustainable, healthy, and prosperous societies.

This pandemic, as well as our deepening climate crisis, has made it increasingly clear that the challenges of today do not stay contained inside the borders of individual nations.

In our interconnected world where trade, technology, and tourism continue to bring us ever closer together, it is critical that enhanced cooperation—both regional and global—is harnessed to persevere over the transnational

threats that we face and spur greater prosperity.

This is why the leaders of our three countries recognized the deep importance of trilateral cooperation, establishing the TCS and presenting two 10-year visions to help ensure long-term cooperation.

I commend the TCS for its support of the CJK trilateral cooperation mechanism, which strives to meet the vision of the trilateral leaders to achieve peace, stability, and common prosperity in East Asia, along with continuous trilateral institutional development. I also thank the TCS for extending an invitation for me to address this Forum and help kick-start the “New Trilateral Partnership in the Next Decade.”

This hybrid Forum has brought together globally-recognized experts and policy makers from China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea who have distinguished

experience in government, the private sector, academia, civil society, journalism, and beyond.

Everyone gathered today has unique insights to share as we work to scale-up trilateral cooperation and broaden dialogue on matters of mutual concern during this era of uncertainty. As such, allow me to further expand on the importance of the three session topics of this Forum.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies & Gentlemen,

First, regarding the achievements of the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat(TCS) and the future of trilateral cooperation, I am heartened by both the concrete progress over the last decade as well as the positive outlook for the next ten years.

The TCS has succeeded in boosting significant cooperation between the three countries alongside the 16

tripartite ministerial meetings, cooperative projects, and multiple inter-governmental dialogue mechanisms.

Particularly, I note with appreciation its deep engagement in the fields of environment, health, disaster management, and education. These are four absolutely essential fields for the future of our countries as well as humanity and our planet. And I am of the view that the ongoing pandemic has further elevated their importance.

At the same time, as the TCS has been developed in the process of overcoming the Asian financial crisis, I hope that crisis-resistant trilateral cooperation will serve as a robust stepping stone to cope with new challenges and find present opportunities in the COVID-19 era.

In this regard, I commend the 21st Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting (TEMM21) for establishing the 8 Priority Areas for the Joint Action Plan 2020-2024. Each

of these areas are crucial for addressing the climate crisis—and implementing the Paris Agreement—in a cooperative manner, and are inherently future-oriented.

In this connection, and in order to ensure a viable pathway for cooperation under the auspices of the “Trilateral Cooperation Vision for the Next Decade,” I believe that we must continue to forge solutions to the pressing challenges that we face based on regional cooperation, partnership, sustainability, and an inherently global outlook.

Second, I am pleased that this Forum will be addressing Digital Economy, Sustainable Development, and Business Recovery. These interrelated areas are necessary as we recover from the impacts of the pandemic and seek to construct a more resilient and sustainable world.

When serving as UN Secretary-General, I strived to

elevate the private sector in partnerships with a view to catalyzing progress on sustainable development and spurring climate action. Indeed, to achieve the SDGs we need an all-of-society approach that harnesses the benefits of digital economy.

And this is now even more important as we strive to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic and forge a viable post-COVID-19 world for our children and grandchildren.

Third, regarding Empowering the Future Generation – Trilateral Youth Community Building, I believe this is unquestionably critical for our countries moving forward.

Young people hold the keys to unlock the cooperation and partnership that will be integral to defining the economic, security, and environmental futures of our three countries.

Today, our countries' young people increasingly use each

other's technology, consume each other's media and culture, and travel between our nations. While some historical mistrust may persist, it is waning in our globalized world compared to the older generations.

In this regard, I highly commend the success of the TCS X CAMPUS Asia Alumni Workshop program, as well as its support of the CJK Children's Story Exchange & organizing alumni sessions. Education will continue to be imperative for the future of Trilateral Cooperation.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies & Gentlemen,

We must be ready to confront the COVID-19, coming climate emergency, the next pandemic, or any future economic, humanitarian, or security crises together.

In this regard, I do hope that our three countries will be able to start regional security discussions involving

governments and experts for constructive dialogue and consultation on permanent peace and security issues in Northeast Asia in the near future.

At the same time, cooperation is not only beneficial for economic and social development, but for peace and prosperity in the region, too.

Indeed, we have an incredible opportunity to enhance our fruitful cooperation on areas of mutual convergence.

Simultaneously, we can also lessen the longstanding tensions in our relations and help educate and empower the dynamic next generations in our three countries.

With your ongoing efforts to this end, I am confident that the “New Trilateral Partnership in the Next Decade” will help illuminate not only a brighter East Asia, but a more resilient, sustainable, secure, and prosperous world for us

all.

I thank you for your attention. Thank you. Xie Xie,
Arigatou Gozaimasu, 감사합니다.../END/