

## Seoul Declaration

The 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Greater Tumen Initiative Consultative Commission  
28 April 2016

*The 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI) Consultative Commission (CC) was concluded on the 28 April 2016 with the participation of high-level delegates from the GTI Member States: the People's Republic of China (hereafter "China"), Mongolia, the Republic of Korea (hereafter "Korea") and the Russian Federation (hereafter "Russia"), as well as the representatives of local governments of Northeast Asia, financing institutions, research institutions, and international organizations.*

We, representatives of the GTI Member States meeting in Seoul on 28 April 2016 on the occasion of the 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the GTI CC, resolve to take actions to expedite GTI's legal transition process, to envisage the prospects of regional economic development in Northeast Asia (NEA), and deliberate on strategies to further enhance the cooperation under the framework of the GTI.

We review with satisfaction the substantive development progresses achieved by the GTI since the 15<sup>th</sup> CC Meeting, and acknowledge the continuous strong supports provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other GTI partners.

### 1. Strategic Review

The past 20 years of GTI cooperation have contributed to the regional economic growth and sustainable development through policy dialogue and project implementation. We pledge our continuous collective commitment to promote GTI as a member-driven regional cooperation platform for sustainable development and prosperity of Northeast Asia. Through legal transition, we expect the new organization to carry more tangible benefits by implementing concrete projects for common concerns.

We take note of the outcomes and acknowledge the agreed progress of the legal transition through a number of sessions. Based on the consensus reached so far, we direct National Coordinators (NCs) to expedite discussions, including bilateral consultations, aiming at thoroughly resolving the existing pending issues at an early date. After the conclusion of the Agreement, we commit to finish the ratification process as swift as possible so as for the Agreement to enter into force without delay. We determine to accelerate our efforts on finalizing the other legal texts.

### 2. Cooperation in the Priority Sectors

We appreciate the substantial progresses and outcomes resulted from the projects implemented by the GTI, and agree that the GTI shall commit its increased collaborative efforts on the priority sectors in order to continue its tangible contributions promoting common prosperity in NEA.

#### *Transport*

We underscore that the cooperation on transportation infrastructure is one of the top GTI priorities, and serves as a foundation to further develop other sectors.

We welcome the outcomes of the 5<sup>th</sup> GTI Transport Board Meeting (15 June 2015 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia), in conjunction with the Seminar on Promotion of Sea-Land Multimodal Transport in GTR. We expect more projects in transport sector to generate common interests and reinforce the strategies on regional transport development. We entrust the GTI Secretariat with a task to start the procedure of revision and actualization of the GTI Medium Term Transport Action Plan.

We note with satisfaction the successful completion of the Study Project, "Preliminary Forecast on Transport Volumes and Shipping Costs at Pacific End of Tumen Transport Corridor". We affirm the project deliverables stimulate advancing the development of the Pacific ports and railway connections along the Tumen Transport Corridor, contributing to improve the overall logistics environment in GTR.

Recognizing the importance of partnerships in transport sector, we emphasize the need for improved knowledge sharing and partnership for empowering regional connectivity. We recognize the GTI to become a partner organization of the Expert Group on Eurasia Transport and Logistics Network based on the decision of the ASEM Symposium in Korea (September 2015). We look forward to the 6<sup>th</sup> Transport Board Meeting back to back with the Eurasia Expert Group Meeting in July 2016 in Korea.

## *Trade and Investment*

We emphasize the importance of eliminating cross-border barriers in promoting trade expansion, job creation, and economic growth in NEA.

We appreciate the results of the 4<sup>th</sup> Trade Facilitation Committee (TFC) Meeting together with the 4<sup>th</sup> International Seminar on Trade Facilitation (19 Nov 2014 in Vladivostok, Russia) and the 5<sup>th</sup> TFC Meeting with the 5<sup>th</sup> International Seminar on Trade Facilitation (2 September 2015 in Changchun, China). Considering the need to restructure the current TFC, we endorse the Concept Note for Future Direction of TFC, agree to restructure TFC into the Trade and Investment Committee (TIC) to tackle broader agendas on trade and investment, and establish the Customs Sub-Committee (CSC) to deal with trade facilitation issues under the umbrella of TIC.

We stress the need to reinforce knowledge sharing in trade and investment sector and welcome the result of GTI Trade Facilitation Study conducted by UNDP. We recognize the efficient resource mobilization and the successful implementation of the project, "Capacity Building Program for Mongolian Customs Officials to Implement Authorized Economic Operator (AEO)" (14-18 Sep 2015 in Cheonan, Korea). As an annual event, we appreciate Korea Customs Service for organizing the 4th Capacity Building Program on Trade Facilitation with topics on paperless trade and AEO (16-20 Nov 2015 in Daejeon, Korea). We endorse the project, "AEO Cooperation Scheme among Customs Administration" with an aim to produce a standardized AEO Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) text through the operation of a working group in 2016-2017.

We agree to make concerted efforts to encourage private enterprises to participate in the GTI International Trade & Investment EXPO, and look forward to the 4<sup>th</sup> EXPO, which will be held in Gangwon Province, Korea in October 2016.

We reaffirm to commit enhancing cooperation with the chambers of the Member States in GTI activities through the establishment of the NEA National Chambers Association soon.

## *Tourism*

We recognize the significance of tourism cooperation among the GTI Member States and all NEA countries, and stress the needs to develop more feasible and result-oriented projects, including Multi-Destination Tourism (MDT) products, to promote NEA as the world's most attractive tourism destination.

We note with satisfaction the successful conclusion of the 8<sup>th</sup> Tourism Board Meeting (1 July 2015 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia) and the 4<sup>th</sup> NEA Tourism Forum (10 November 2015 in Hunchun, China). We acknowledge the positive outputs from Capacity Training Building Programme (31 January – 4 February 2015 in Arxan, China).

We look forward to the 9<sup>th</sup> Tourism Board meeting and the 5<sup>th</sup> GTI NEA Tourism Forum in China in 2016.

## *Energy*

We remain committed to make more efforts to enhance regional cooperation in energy sector. We note the outcomes of the 4<sup>th</sup> Energy Board Meeting (7 September 2015 in Yanji, China) with the approval of the GTI Energy Work Plan 2015-2016.

We note the progress on the successful completion of the project, "Capacity Building Training Project on Energy: Policies and Prospects for Regional Energy Cooperation", with its finalized regional report. We anticipate the project, "Research on Regional Industrial Energy Efficiency Cooperation", to deliver tangible outcomes through its implementation in 2016.

We wish the success of the 5<sup>th</sup> Energy Board Meeting back to back with the NEA Energy Seminar in Korea in 2016.

## *Environment*

We attach great importance to enhance GTI cooperation in environment protection and sustainable development. To this end, we endorse the flagship project, "Proposal of GTI Environment Cooperation Strategy in Northeast Asia", to reactivate environmental cooperation in the region.

## *Agriculture*

We fully support the establishment of the Agriculture Committee and congratulate its Inaugural Meeting held in the Framework of the 16<sup>th</sup> CC Meeting. We endorse the TOR of the GTI Agriculture Committee,

and Short and Mid Term Plan for Agricultural Cooperation. We note with satisfaction the successful completion of the project, "Study Project for Agricultural Cooperation in NEA", with results providing policy recommendations for the key issues to be addressed by the GTI Agriculture Committee. We anticipate the intra-sector resource sharing and close cooperation between Agriculture Committee and the TIC on Quarantine issues.

### **3. Partnership Development**

We highly value the involvement of NEA local governments, financial institutions, research institutions, and other international organizations in GTI activities for regional cooperation and development. We acknowledge the significant progress on partnership buildings.

We recognize the significant roles of NEA local governments in regional cooperation. We positively value the 3<sup>rd</sup> GTI NEA Local Cooperation Committee (LCC) Meeting, Local Development Forum (7-8 August 2015 in Choibalsan, Mongolia) and the Dornod Declaration. We endorse the establishment of the Logistics Sub-Committee and encourage more participation from stakeholders. We welcome the new membership of Busan Metropolitan City and Jeju Special Self-Governing Province. We envision to further enhance regional prosperity through the engagement of NEA local governments and the implementation of concrete projects to achieve goals and objectives set by the proposed LCC Action Plan. We note that the 4<sup>th</sup> LCC Meeting is expected to take place in Korea in 2016.

We believe the signing of the Amendment of the Framework Agreement on the Establishment and Operation of the NEA EXIM Banks Association will generate a more effective resource mobilization mechanism to implement GTI projects. We welcome the progress with Zarubino Port project identified as a pilot project, and anticipate stronger resource-mobilized financial supports toward infrastructure development in the region.

We congratulate the official inauguration with signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment and Operation of the GTI Research Institutions Network. We welcome the research outputs from the Network members in 2015, and advise the GTI Research Institutions Network to continue serve as a brain trust to promote the economic cooperation and integration in NEA.

We appreciate the longstanding supports on administration and fund management provided by UNDP, and the technical assistance on GTI activities provided by UNDP, GIZ, UNESCAP, and ADB. We seek deeper cooperation with extended partners to promote synergy and foster cooperation through the involvement of regional development activities.

### **4. Administration, Finance and Project Management**

We review and endorse the 2016 Work Plan, 2015 Expenditure, and 2016 Budget Proposal. With the expansion of the GTI cooperative activities and its enlarged work forces, we understand the necessity for increasing the financial contributions after the legal transition and endorse the Budget Proposal after Legal Transition.

We endorse the GTI Guideline for Soft Projects which serves as a fundamental instrument for project formulation, selection, implementation, and evaluation.

### **5. The Way Forward**

The Governments of China, Mongolia and Russia extend their gratitude to the Government of Korea for its chairmanship since the 15<sup>th</sup> GTI CC Meeting and for the successful hosting of the 16<sup>th</sup> GTI CC Meeting in Seoul, Korea. We highly value Member States' efforts, including Korea's "Eurasia Initiative" and other Member States' related policies, to contribute to GTI development.

We appreciate the GTI Secretariat for its effective implementation of the decisions of the Consultative Commission.

We look forward to convening the 17<sup>th</sup> GTI CC Meeting in November 2016 hosted by Russia.