

**Concept Note for
North-East Asia Development Cooperation Forum 2017:**

Development cooperation in SDG implementation for a more secure and prosperous world

**28-29 September 2017
Moscow, Russia**

Organized by

ESCAP East and North-East Asia Office, Russian Association of International Development Assistance Experts (RAIDAE) and the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration

In partnership with

Japan Society for International Development (JASID), Korea Association of International Development and Cooperation (KAIDEC), and China International Development Research Network (CIDRN)

Background

North-East Asian countries are characterized by their experience as both recipients and donors of development aid in recent history, as well as their importance in the development assistance as OECD/DAC members (Japan and ROK) and BRICS donors (China and Russia). Growing presence of emerging donors is exemplified by their recent initiatives to establish BRICS New Development Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), as well as China's "Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)". The wealth of experience gained during their transformation from recipients to providers of development assistance and their growing significance in various forms of development cooperation, cooperation and partnership among North-East Asian countries in development assistance will potentially bring significant benefits to recipient countries. It is of particular importance in the context of achieving the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals which calls for broad range of cooperation and mobilization of resources to provide means of implementation.

The North-East Asia Development Cooperation Forum was initiated by ESCAP East and North-East Asia Office to facilitate analytical discussions on policies and practices of development cooperation in North-East Asia as well as potential areas of collaboration among North-East Asian countries.

The forum strives to achieve the following objectives:

- To create a platform of researchers and practitioners to critically review and analyze trends and policies of development cooperation in North-East Asian countries based on their research and experiences.
- To create an international network of academic associations, research institutions, government institutions, inter-governmental organizations, and UN organizations engaged in issues related to development cooperation in North-East Asian countries.
- To identify potential areas of collaboration among North-East Asian countries in development cooperation and assistance.

- To marshal the potential of North-East Asia in making a fundamental difference to the development of Asia Pacific region.

Since the first Forum in November 2014 in Seoul, the Forums have been organized as joint endeavour of partners in the North-East Asia, namely China International Development Research Network (CIDRN), Japan Society for International Development (JASID), Korea Association of International Development and Cooperation (KAIDEC), as well as a group of Russian researchers that became Russian Association of International Development Assistance Experts (RAEDAE) since its formal establishment in 2016.

The Forums brought together researchers and practitioners of development cooperation from the four countries as well as recipient countries in Asia.

The first Forum, jointly organized by ENEA Office and KAIDEC, facilitated partnership among researchers and practitioners of development cooperation in North-East Asia and generated strong interest to continue with such initiative. Thus it led to the second Forum held in Tokyo in 2015 hosted by JASID and JICA Research Institute, supported by other partners. As a spin-off of the Forum in Tokyo, selected papers were published as a special issue of Asia-Pacific Development Journal (Vol. 23, No. 2, December 2016). The third Forum in 2016 was organized in Suzhou, China, jointly hosted by CIDRN and Department of International Cooperation in Development Research Center (DRC) of the State Council of China. It highlighted the role of development cooperation in North-East Asia towards achievement of Sustainable Development Goals.

Overview of the 2017 Forum

The North-East Asia Development Cooperation Forum strives to capture and discuss the most topical and pressing issues in the development cooperation agenda in the North-East Asia.

Sustainable Development Goals, an ambitious agenda covering a broad range of issues, identify factors which prevent sustainable development such as social, economic and environmental vulnerability as well as threats to peace and security.

Amid rising inequity, protracted conflicts and climate change, there has been increasing emphasis on the importance of recognizing the links between sustainable development and sustainable peace. Thus, sustainable development is seen as a prerequisite for a more secure society and vice versa. SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions encompasses such interconnected issues as rule of law at the national and international levels and equal access to justice for all, combating illicit financial and arms flows, developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions, participation of developing countries in global governance institutions and so on.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres emphasized a need for a global response that addresses the root causes of conflict and integrates peace, sustainable development and human rights in a holistic way, from conception to execution.¹ Development assistance thus need to address root causes and

¹ United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres at the UN General Assembly high-level dialogue in 2017, <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/blog/2017/01/guterres-highlights-importance-of-recognizing-the-links-between-peace-and-sustainable-development/>

conditions that increases vulnerability and give rise to conflict in general, such as extreme poverty, inequality, poor quality of institutions, etc.

Along with the ambitious SDGs, the scope of development cooperation is also expanded, to match the resource requirements at unprecedented scale to implement the goals. SDGs call for mobilization of official and private resources as well as various modalities including South-South Cooperation. Large scale regional initiatives such as China's Belt and Road Initiative can be broadly considered as South-South cooperation. The trend on integrating peace and security into development cooperation has also found its way into the redesigning the very definition of ODA. The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC)'s revised definition of ODA which includes certain military, security and police costs insofar as they contribute to aid outcomes².

The Forum in 2017 thus focuses on the growing interconnectedness of the development cooperation with other issues such as vulnerabilities and security, to assess possible positive and negative consequences of this trend and to discuss the research avenues that can be followed by the partnering networks. The Forum also explore possibility of better cooperation among North-East Asian countries amidst more challenging and complicated roles of development cooperation towards achievement of sustainable development.

Suggested format of the 2017 Forum

Since the Forum 2016, one session is dedicated for discussion on an area of development cooperation issue of special interest in the host network.

Opening	Participation of Russian government official in the opening will be explored
Session 1. Russian Roundtable: Securing developing in the greater Eurasia	- Russian presentations - Comments and responses from members of other partners - Q &A and open discussion
Session 2. Development cooperation to strengthen the resilience	(Expansion of topic in Session 1) - Presentations by each network and invited speakers - Q&A and open discussion
Session 3. North-East Asia partnership for implementing SDGs	(Link with topic covered in Forum 2016) - Presentations by each network and invited speakers - Q&A and open discussion
Session 4. Academic collaboration in the field of development cooperation	(Sharing experiences and exchanging views) - Brief presentations by each network - Open discussion
Session 5. Concluding session (summary/recommendation)	(Conclusions and recommendations to be drawn from discussion during the Forum)
Focal point meeting	(Meeting of principals and focal points of the partner networks)

² OECD DAC High Level Meeting Communiqué, February 2019. <http://www.oecd.org/dac/DAC-HLM-Communiqué-2016.pdf>

Expected Outputs

To be published electronically on the websites of ESCAP as well as of partner networks.

- A brief description of the presentations as well as presentation slides (if applicable)
- Background papers of the presentation (optional)
- Summary of the discussion of the Forum
- Conclusions and recommendations on development cooperation in North-East Asia

Forum Participants

- Members of the partner networks
- Researchers on development cooperation from recipient (partner) countries in Asia-Pacific (selection of countries to be further discussed). The 2017 Forum could focus on researchers from Central Asian countries as well as other North-East Asian countries
- International organizations
- Bilateral development organizations or equivalent government office in North-East Asia
- Government officials (at their own capacity)
- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
- Interested researchers and development practitioners

Partners profile

ESCAP ENEA Office is a subregional office of ESCAP, covering 6 member states (China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia, Republic of Korea, and Russian Federation) and 2 associate members (Hong Kong, China and Macao, China).

China International Development Research Network (CIDRN) is a network of Chinese scholars interested in international development from different disciplinary backgrounds such as international relations, development studies, economics and other related fields have formed an informal network to share their research both amongst themselves and with policymakers in China, and beyond.

Japan Society for International Development (JASID) is an academic society that tries to bring together knowledge and experience about international development and cooperation from multiple disciplines, ranging from economics and management to politics, sociology, anthropology, agriculture, technology, medicine, and so forth.

Korea Association of International Development and Cooperation (KAIDEC) is an academic association of scholars from academic institutes in multidisciplinary subjects, government personnel working in development cooperation, private sector business personnel in charge of overseas investment, and field workers of NGOs.

Russian Association of International Development Assistance Experts (RAEDAE) is association of researchers and practitioners of development cooperation in Russian Federation officially established in 2016. The association was initiated by the researchers who participated in the first North-East Asia Development Cooperation Forum in Seoul in 2014.

Provisional Programme

28 September 2017 (Thursday)	
9:30 – 10:00	Registration
10:00 – 10:30	Opening session
10:30 – 10:50	Group photo and coffee break
10:50 – 11:00	Overview of Development Cooperation in North-East Asia (ESCAP)
11:00 – 12:30	Session 1. Russia Roundtable: Securing developing in the greater Eurasia
12:30 – 13:45	Lunch
13:45 – 15:35	Session 2. Development cooperation to strengthen resilience
15:35 – 16:00	Coffee break
16:00 – 17:50	Session 3. North-East Asia partnership for implementing SDGs
17:50 – 18:00	Wrap up of Day 1
	Cocktail reception
29 September 2017 (Friday)	
9:30 – 10:50	Session 4 Academic collaboration in the field of development cooperation
10:50 – 11:10	Coffee break
11:10 – 12:30	Session 5. Concluding session (summary/recommendation)
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 15:00	[Network focal points meeting]

Description of each session

SESSION 1: RUSSIA ROUND TABLE: SECURING DEVELOPMENT IN THE GREATER EURASIA

Accelerating shift of economic power to the Asia-Pacific has opened totally new perspectives for the Eurasian continent. The vision of goods, capital, people and ideas travelling fast between Asia and Europe through the vast Eurasian landmass has heated the imagination of both policymakers and entrepreneurs in all North-East Asian countries. China's 'Belt and Road Initiative', Republic of Korea's 'Eurasian Initiative', Japan's 'Partnership for Quality Infrastructure: Investment for Asia's Future' and Russia's 'Eurasian Comprehensive Partnership', however distinct, all share the intent of maximizing development opportunities across the Eurasian space. Transforming this vision of richer and more interconnected Eurasia into reality requires massive financial and intellectual efforts from both the visionaries themselves and the beneficiaries of their development cooperation and investment projects and programs.

The aforementioned goals are unachievable without creating new opportunities in the landlocked region of Central Asia. Central Asia is home to some of the least developed countries in Asia and is extremely vulnerable to economic and environmental risks and to security challenges, both internal and external. In this region, increased interconnectedness might not only bring economic benefits but also amplify transnational threats, such as terrorism and violent extremism, organized crime, illegal

migration etc. Careless development interventions and investments might exacerbate the fragility of Central Asian countries to the detriment of the long-term vital interests of all North-East Asian countries.

The Round Table seeks to facilitate open discussion on the indissoluble linkages between security and development in the Eurasian space and, in Central Asia, in particular, and find answers to the following questions:

- How do the North-East Asia countries conceptualize the linkages between security and development in their latest ‘Eurasian’ initiatives?
- To what extent do these conceptualizations differ from the ‘security-development nexus’ paradigm promoted by the established donors in the past 15 years with heightened security concerns in the world including in developed countries?
- How development cooperation might help to increase the resilience of the most vulnerable countries of the Greater Eurasia to security threats? Which modalities, instruments and channels of delivery should be prioritized? How do development interventions should be sequenced in order to achieve the best results?

SESSION 2: CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND RESILIENCE

The interconnectedness of the sustainable development and sustaining peace calls for a holistic response to development challenges. The session will focus on the opportunities created by the support for human development, education, health, employment, infrastructure, equal access to resources, sustainable natural resources management and many other dimensions of the development assistance. Taken together they are meant to reduce vulnerability, increase resilience of society and prevent underlying drivers of conflict.

Integrating peace, sustainable development and human rights in holistic way would require investments in infrastructure, human capital, promotion of social cohesion and so forth. Development cooperation plays a vital role and need to keep in mind their potential impacts on recipient countries. Speakers will be asked to reflect on the following issues:

- What measures are needed to turn this rhetoric into practice and to holistically integrate development assistance of various providers so that root causes of conflict are addressed;
- Is this shift already visible in any donor’s policies in terms of sectoral and / or geographic distribution of development assistance;
- Are there any changes in the ways donors provide their support in the areas of education, health, infrastructure and so forth;
- Will the new agenda bring more cohesion to the global development assistance or would lead to its greater fragmentation as donor’s interests vary in regards to security;
- What is the view on the changing definition of ODA to include more security-related activities.

SESSION 3: NORTH-EAST ASIA PARTNERSHIP FOR IMPLEMENTING SDGS

The session focuses on cross-border partnership for implementing SDGs in North-East Asia. Discussions on partnership in the past Forums often focused on cooperation and partnership within countries. This

session follows the general topic of partnership for implementation of SDGs, but specifically highlights partnership among East and North-East Asian countries in development cooperation.

The Sustainable Development Goals include targets which spell out how to support implementation of each Goal. Furthermore, the Goal 17 specifically focuses on how to strengthen the implementation through global partnership.

Development cooperation for implementation of SDGs has a broad scope of cooperation beyond traditional ODA, taking various modalities including financial and non-financial cooperation, knowledge sharing, technology and capacity building, trade, etc. Thus development cooperation is expected to contribute in wide range of areas, from poverty reduction, health, education to trade, technology, infrastructure development, etc.

Thus, speakers of the session may reflect on the following issues;

- What are successful cases of cooperation among countries in the North-East Asia in assisting other developing countries? What are the drivers of collaboration among the countries involved?
- How North-East Asian countries could/should provide coherent development assistance to reduce vulnerabilities (addressing such issues as poverty, education, health, disaster responses)?
- How some of the on-going subregional cooperation initiatives in North-East Asian countries can be up-scaled for larger impact?
- How large scale initiatives such as Belt and Road Initiative can enhance subregional cooperation and be harnessed towards achieving SDGs?
- What are the policy recommendation to facilitate subregional cooperation – in what channels and what areas?

SESSION 4: ACADEMIC COLLABORATION IN THE FIELD OF DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

The session has broader scope than research collaboration as it reviews the state of what is happening in the academic field of development cooperation in North-East Asian countries. The session will facilitate sharing of experiences in curriculum, syllabus (if available in English), references, and teaching methods, and identifying specificity of academic cooperation in North East Asia, etc.

- What are the states of academic field of development cooperation in respective country?
- How does the academic work influence on policies and practices of development cooperation in the country?
- What are the structures of curriculum of academic programme on development cooperation?
Are there standard references books teaching development cooperation?
- What are the recommendations for enhancing academic collaboration in the field of development cooperation?

SESSION 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The session attempts to develop a set of recommendations – options to strengthen cooperation – in the area of North-East Asia development cooperation, based on the discussion during the Forum. The recommendations should be drawn from the discussion during the Forum.