

# **A Petition for Creation of an East Asian Community Working for Peace, Cooperation and Prosperity**

Attention: Leaders of East Asia Summit Member States

Led by the ASEAN member states, leaders of 18 countries including the US, China, Russia, Japan and South Korea have regularly gathered at the East Asia Summit in recent years. Each time, they have confirmed the fundamental principles of mutual respect for sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, and non-interference in each state's internal affairs as well as the renunciation of the threat or use of force. They have also encouraged the settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful means and effective cooperation among themselves. We sincerely and whole heartedly welcome these developments.

However, it is also true that confrontations and disputes have presented themselves in East Asia. Even armed conflicts have erupted sporadically. Some people fear that these confrontations and tensions between countries may escalate into a military confrontation or even into war.

What people in the region desire is regional political stability and economic and social development. In fact, issues related to poverty, inequality, discrimination, access to education, access to adequate health care and climate change need to be urgently addressed. East Asian countries, having achieved a remarkable degree of economic development, are deepening their relations of interdependence and complementarity through trade arrangements and investments as never before. In light of the evolving situation in the region, we must avoid the creation of avoidable tensions that may lead to armed conflicts or wars.

In addition, there are countries which possess nuclear weapons in the region. Nuclear threats still exist. In order to create a true community of peace, it is essential to promptly start negotiations to convene a nuclear weapons abolition convention.

We will work with others to establish a Community of Peace, Cooperation and Prosperity in East Asia. As a first step to accomplish this aim, we hereby submit this petition to the leaders of East Asian Nations to take following steps.

1. Increase cooperation in tackling common problems such as natural disasters, infectious diseases, and environmental issues where they can immediately cooperate and mutually assist, and foster and develop the mutual trust and respect needed to create an environment to facilitate dialog.
2. Further advance the confidence-building process, and create specific and detailed rules in order to resolve disputes through peaceful negotiations to prevent the escalation of armed conflicts into war.
3. Work together to conclude "East Asia Friendship and Cooperation Treaty", modeled on the "Treaty of Amity and Cooperation" of the Southeast Asian Nations (TAC) which stipulates not only the peaceful solution of disputes and avoidance of armed conflicts but also non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations and renunciation of the threat or use of force.

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