

Report on the 2023 NEAR International Forum and the 14th Subcommittee on Economy and Humanities Exchange

- ❖ More than 200 attendees, including representatives from 38 metropolitan local governments from five countries and 16 related organizations, the largest number to date
- ❖ First-ever local government session providing promotional opportunities for NEAR members

I Highlights of the Expert Session

Summaries of the Presentations

- 1st Speaker: DA Zhigang, Second-level Researcher of the Northeast Asia Research Institute, Heilongjiang Academy of Social Sciences
 - Assesses the current political landscape in Northeast Asia and proposes strategies for deepening regional cooperation
 - Emphasizes the need to institutionalize multilateral cooperation among local governments in Northeast Asia and to establish a network of think tankers
- 2nd Speaker: HABA Kumiko, President of the International Studies Association, Asia Pacific Region
 - Japan is experiencing a rapidly declining birthrate and aging population, and its labor force is expected to be half the size it is today in 40 years. Therefore, cooperation with neighboring countries is crucial.
 - With the decline of US-European hegemony and the rapid growth of China and India, East Asia needs to take on the role of leading the development of world peace.
- 3rd Speaker: LEE Hyuk, President of the Korea Japan Future Forum
 - Bilateral and multilateral relations between the three countries are much more complex and unstable than in the past due to intensifying US-China rivalry and the war in Ukraine.

- To mitigate this instability, it is important to promote exchange and cooperation among local governments, especially in non-diplomatic and security sectors that are less constrained by the diplomatic and security situation.
- **4th Speaker: JAMIYAN Battur, Associate Professor at the National University of Mongolia**
- In the past few decades, economic exchanges between Northeast Asian countries have increased, but mutual distrust has deepened. The North Korean nuclear issue, the China-Taiwan issue, and the Russo-Ukraine War are examples of this.
 - There is a need to strengthen cooperation between local governments and the private sector in Northeast Asia and to adopt a charter such as the European Charter of Local Self-Government (Strasbourg 1985) to resolve conflicts between central governments.
- **5th Speaker: LUKIN Alexander, Director of the Center for East Asian and Shanghai Cooperation Organization Studies, Moscow State Institute of International Relations at the University of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia**
- Russia is increasing its cooperation with Asian countries, especially China, due to Western sanctions against Russia after the Russo-Ukrainian War.
 - In the future, projects such as the construction of the Russia-China-Mongolia Economic Corridor, the Russia-China-North Korea Development of Tuman River, the construction of the Russia-China gas pipelines and railways, and the joint development of the Russia-Japan disputed islands can be jointly implemented.

Summaries of the Discussion

- **1st Panelist: LI Ruifeng, Professor at the Inner Mongolia University of Finance and Economics**
- In 2022, Northeast Asian countries will have a combined GDP of nearly \$30 trillion, one-third of the world's total, so the potential for development in the region is enormous.

- She agrees with the experts' call for greater cooperation at the local government level in Northeast Asia.
- **2nd Panelist: SHIN Bong-seop, Professor at KwangWoon University Graduate School (Former Korean Consul-General in Shenyang, China)**
 - Local governments should play a buffer role as a way out of the central-government cooperation dilemma.
 - He agrees with Dr. DA Zhigang's statement that institutional support is needed to revitalize local diplomacy.
- **3rd Panelist: KIM Hyeongsoo, President of the Korean Association of Northeast Studies (KNEA)**
 - NEAR plays a big role in creating and stabilizing locally-led international organizations.
 - Local governments should have their own diplomatic lines, and systems should be put in place to allow for greater autonomy and decentralization of local diplomacy.
- **4th Panelist: DANKOV Artem, Professor at Tomsk State University**
 - Northeast Asian countries should share experiences on issues such as environmental issues, sustainable urban development, and agriculture. Knowledge exchange, joint research aimed at solving common problems in the community, and youth knowledge exchange will have a long-term impact on regional development.

Summaries of the Special Lecture Session

- **1st Speaker: KIM Kihun, Senior Fellow at the National Youth Policy Institute**
 - South Korea enacts and implements the Youth Policy Act every five years for young people aged 19-34, which includes provisions to ensure youth employment and reduce the burden of securing housing for young people.
 - Both the central government and local governments are required by law to provide opportunities for youth to engage in international peace promotion and international cooperation activities. Based on this, various youth international exchange

programs such as the KOICA Overseas Volunteer Corps are underway.

○ **2nd Speaker: KIM Hoseok, Chief Research Fellow at the Korea Environment Institute (KEI)**

- While the Asia-Pacific region has made some progress achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, overall implementation is slow and only 14.4% of the interim level of implementation needed to reach the 2030 Goals has been achieved.
- The region has made notable progress toward the 2030 Goals in the areas of economic clean energy and industry, innovation, and infrastructure, but has regressed in the area of climate action, requiring urgent action in this area.

○ **3rd Speaker: KIM Dongsoo, Senior Research Fellow and Executive Director of the Center for International Industry and Trade at the Korea Institute for Industrial Economics and Trade (KIET)**

- As the Northeast Asian region undergoes a phase of increasing regionalization prompted by growing protectionism, fostering close economic cooperation becomes crucial.
- In the short term, the Northeast Asian region requires collaboration in sectors like advanced industrial technology and local governance by private entities. Looking ahead to the mid to long term, there is a pressing need for collective strategies and addressing the shift to a digital economy, challenges related to carbon neutrality, and societal issues stemming from a rapidly aging population.

Summaries of the Local Government Session

○ **1st Speaker: ZHI Yong, Deputy Director at the Research Office of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region People's Government**

- The Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region was selected to serve as the coordinator of the Subcommittee on Energy Cooperation at the 14th NEAR General Assembly
- By capitalizing its strengths, the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region

aims to play a pivotal role in driving economic revitalization and ensuring the stable prosperity of the Northeast Asian region.

○ **2nd Speaker: LV Dayu, Director of the Cultural Exchange Division at Jilin People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries**

- Jilin is rich in ecological resources, the cradle of China's industry, an important food warehouse for China, and an important window for the opening up of the North.
- China-ROK (Changchun) International Cooperation Demonstration Zone has a favorable geographical location and business environment, abundant scientific and educational resources, complete production and living facilities, and a variety of government support policies.
- Entrepreneurs from NEAR members are encouraged to invest and start businesses in Jilin.

○ **3rd Speaker: LIU Xiao, Deputy Director of the International Division at the Gansu Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism**

- Gansu is located on the golden section of the Chinese Silk Road, with rich cultural heritage and beautiful natural scenery.
- We look forward to welcoming NEAR members to Gansu.

○ **4th Speaker: KUBO Mitsuki, Officer of the Civic Affairs, Environment & Culture Department, International Affairs Division at Toyama Prefecture**

- Toyama Prefecture shares sister city ties with China's Liaoning Province, Yunnan Province, Shanghai City, Guangdong Province, Russia's Primorsky Territory, and South Korea's Gangwon Province.
- During the visit of the Gangwon Province governor to Toyama Prefecture from November 2 to 4, 2023, a friendship and cooperation agreement was signed with Gangwon Province. Additionally, the upcoming year of 2024 marks the 40th anniversary of the friendship agreement with Liaoning Province, symbolizing a longstanding and enduring partnership.

○ **5th Speaker: CHUNG Hae-kwan, Ambassador for International Affairs in Daegu Metropolitan City**

- Highlighting Daegu's global engagement, this encompasses collaboration with international organizations, sister cities, overseas offices, advisors abroad, and diplomatic missions in Korea. Additionally, it includes involvement in international exchange events, youth exchange initiatives, support for public diplomacy activities by private organizations, projects aiding foreign residents

locally, and the management of overseas social media channels.

○ **6th Speaker: KWAK Tae Yeol, Ambassador for International Affairs in Chungcheongbuk-do**

- Chungcheongbuk-do has implemented the 'K-International Student Program' with the aim of bolstering the local population and invigorating the regional economy.
- The 'K-International Student Program' supports international students at 17 universities in the province by assisting them with covering tuition fees through part-time employment.

○ **7th Speaker: CHAE Jin-weon, Ambassador for International Affairs in Gyeongsangbuk-do**

- He presents an overview of the current status of universities in Gyeongsangbuk-do and highlights a mutually beneficial cooperation model involving local universities, companies, and governmental entities.
- In addition, he sheds light on distinctive industries Gyeongsangbuk-do, including Gumi semiconductors, Pohang secondary batteries, Uiseong pseudo-cell culture, and Cheongsong anti-aging initiatives.

○ **8th Speaker: JUNG Myoungsook, Director of the Battery & High-tech Industry Division in Pohang-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do**

- She presents the current trends, advancements, and the designation of special complexes in Pohang's secondary battery industry, along with plans to nurture its growth.
- The evolution of Pohang's secondary battery industry is anticipated to generate high-quality employment opportunities, enhance university competitiveness, attract population influx, and rejuvenate the local economy.

○ **9th Speaker: KANG Hogu, Director at the Sino-Korea Economy/Society Institute**

- Within the NEAR association, the Korean members heavily rely on maritime transportation for their imports and exports, constituting 99.7% of the total. In contrast, the China-Mongolia-Russia members, while not situated along major international shipping corridors, benefit from freight transportation routes seamlessly integrated with railway lines, offering efficient intermodal

transportation.

- NEAR members are encouraged to broaden collaboration and fortify economic ties by leveraging complementary strengths in their respective industries while expanding import and export markets.
- Furthermore, enhancing communication among members is essential to bolster competitiveness in maritime intermodal transportation.

○ **10th Speaker: DORJRANGCHAA Altangshagai, Head of the Governor**

Administration of the Bulgan Province

- Bulgan Province seeks collaboration with NEAR members in the following areas:
 - Education Sector: Human resource development, teacher and student exchange
 - Health Sector: Exchange programs for medical staff, phased initiatives for knowledge transfer, and support for technical equipment
 - Tourism Sector: Joint implementation of specialized tourism programs, including nature tourism, extreme tourism, and sports tourism, alongside mutual cultural promotion.
- NEAR members are encouraged to join the Winter Sports Festival in Bulgan Province (January), the 'Shagain Toirom' event (May), the Nadam Festival (July), the Mayuzu and Horse Festival (August) and the "Bulgans Working Together" meeting (October).

○ **11th Speaker: ULZII Suvdaa, Head of the Governor Administration of the Selenge Province**

- Selenge Province has established collaboration with Jeju Special Self-Governing Province, South Korea; the Republic of Buryatia, Russia; Huhehaote City, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China; and Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan.
- Selenge Province seeks to expand collaboration with NEAR members in the areas of agriculture, eco-friendly food production, logistics, tourism, ecosystem restoration projects, and education.

○ 12th Speaker: VASILYEVA Svetlana, Deputy Minister of the Economic Development and Industry of the Irkutsk Region

- She highlights the industrial advantages, foreign economic activities, investment support mechanisms, major investment projects, tourism, and Special Economic Zone (SEZ) development, logistics, etc. in the Irkutsk Region.
- The Irkutsk Region expresses a keen interest in collaborating with NEAR members

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Photos

Opening Ceremony



Group Photo

NEAR International Forum 2023 – Expert Session



SHIN Bongkil
President of the Korean Council on Foreign Relations



DA Zhigang
Second-level Researcher of the Northeast Asia Research Institute, Heilongjiang Academy of Social Sciences



HABA Kumiko
President of the International Studies Association, Asia Pacific Region



LEE Hyuk
President of the Korea Japan Future Forum



JAMIYAN Battur
Professor at the National University of Mongolia



LUKIN Alexander
Director of the Center for East Asian and Shanghai Cooperation Organization Studies, Moscow State Institute of International Relations



LI Ruifeng
Professor at the Inner Mongolia University of Finance and Economics



SHIN Bong-seop
Professor at KwangWoon University Graduate school (Former Korean Consul-General in Shenyang, China)



KIM Hyeongsoo
President of the Korean Association of Northeast Studies (KNEA)



DANKOV Artem
Professor at Tomsk State University

The 14th Subcommittee on Economy and Humanities Exchange

Special Lecture Session



Korea's Youth Policy and International Youth Exchange
- KIM Kihun, Senior Fellow at the National Youth Policy Institute



Strengthening Policy and Finance for Sustainable Development:
The Role of Regional Collaboration
- KIM Hoseok, Chief Research Fellow at the Korea Environment Institute (KEI)



Guiding Northeast Asian Industrial Cooperation in the Era of Strategic Competition
- KIM Dongsoo, Senior Research Fellow at the Korea Institute for Industrial Economics and Trade (KIET)

ZOOM Presentation

Local Government Session



Exploring New Paths to Shared Prosperity and Development Among Governments in Northeast Asia through Enhanced Cooperation in Energy, Resources, and Trade
- ZHI Yong, Deputy Director at the Research Office of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region People's government



Sharing New Opportunities, Jointly Seeking New Advancements
- LV Dayu, Director of the Cultural Exchange Division at Jilin People's Association for Friendship with Foreign countries



Silk Road Symphony, Ruyi Gansu
- LUI Xiao, Deputy Director of the International Division at the Gansu Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism



International Exchange in Toyama Prefecture
- KUBO Mitsuki, Officer of the Civic Affairs, Environment & Culture Department, International Affairs Division

Zoom Presentation



Daegu Metropolitan City's Exchange and Cooperation Projects
 - CHUNG Hae-kwan, Ambassador for International Affairs in Daegu Metropolitan City



Introduction to the International Student Employment Program
 - KWAK Tae Yeol, Ambassador for International Affairs in Chungcheongbuk-do



The Era of Local Governments Led by Gyeongsangbuk-do through Transformation with Its K-U City Project
 - CHAE Jin-weon, Ambassador for International Affairs in Gyeongsangbuk-do



Plan to Foster the Secondary Battery Industry in Pohang City, Gyeongsangbuk-do
 - JUNG Myoungsook, Director of the Battery & High-tech Industry Division in Pohang City, Gyeongsangbuk-do



Northeast Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Using Maritime Intermodal Transportation: the Role of NEAR and Its Member Regions
 - KANG Hogu, Director at the Sino-Korea Economy/Society Institute



Foreign Exchange Status of the Bulgan Province
 - DORJRANGCHAA Altanshagai, Head of the Governor Administration of the Bulgan Province



Potential Field of Cooperation in the Selenge Province
 - ULZII Suvdaa, Head of the Governor Administration of the Selenge Province



Exploring the Investment Potential of the Irkutsk Region
 -VASILYEVA Svetlana, Deputy Minister of the Economic Development and Industry of the Irkutsk Region

Online Participation



Zoom Meeting
Participated by Japanese,
Mongolian, and Russian Members



Tencent Meeting
Participated by Chinese Members

Local Tours



Luncheon and Dinner





Facilities and Booklets

