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The Second “East Asia Local and Regional Government Congress” Joint Statement

Since establishing the “East Asia Local and Regional Government Congress” in October 2010, we have significantly expanded our membership and have gathered here again in Nara for our second Congress.

The local administrative matters including economic and environmental challenges that local and regional governments face extend beyond their borders, and even those of their respective sovereign states. It has become increasingly clear that local administrative challenges cannot be handled by regional unions which have a limited range of control or even their individual nations.

In order to support each other to overcome challenges and to expand collaboration, we have created a network between local and regional governments: The East Asia Local and Regional Government Congress. Today, as representatives of local and regional governments, we engaged in a sincere discussion about “The Role of Local and Regional Government and its Political Systems” within the framework of the network.

Additionally in recent years, many of us have suffered from major natural disasters which have caused major damage and losses to the country. With renewed fear and respect for catastrophic forces of nature, we exchanged candid views on the actions, roles, and responsibilities of local and regional government on risk management.

Preceding the local and regional government leaders’ discussion today, case presentations and/or studies on tourism, community-based consolidation and development, and protection/preservation of cultural assets were conducted at the working level with the active cooperation of experts.

In recognition of the matters set forth below, and with renewed awareness of the role of local and regional government, we have decided to hold the “Third East Asia Local and Regional Government Congress” again in 2012, to enhance our abilities to resolve challenges and contribute to the peaceful development of East Asia through strengthening and expanding the local and regional government network.

Congress Notes

1. Regular and continuous exchange of information between local and regional government representatives assists others to resolve similar challenges, and allows them to form new plans or measures to resolve problems.
2. It is important not only for the leaders of local and regional governments who make decisions, but also the working-level staff who carry out those decisions to have mutual opportunities to learn and improve their skills.
3. Handling local problems requires the participation of not only the local and regional government, but also of a broad range of entities such as the community, its residents, and non-government groups. The local and regional government is responsible for taking proper and timely initiatives, and approaching these groups.
4. In order to share experiences and receive support from central governments, international organizations, and other groups in government, academia, and industries, further promotion and development of the network centering on Japan and East Asia is necessary.

October 25th, 2011