

## Report of the Forth ASEAN-China Rectors' Conference

### *"Bringing New Strategic Thinking to University Collaboration: Challenges for ASEAN-China Partnership"*

28-29 July 2015

National University of Singapore, Singapore

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#### INTRODUCTION

1. The 4<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-China Rectors' Conference was held on 28-29 July 2015 at National University of Singapore with fund support from the ASEAN-China Cooperation Fund. The Conference served as an official platform for the universities leaders to strengthen their academic cooperation and to provide the policy recommendations to the ASEAN-China related meetings. At the Conference, participants had observed the ASEAN and China visions on the ASEAN Connectivity beyond 2015 and Its Implications for ASEAN-China Relations, as well as to observe the special cases of outstanding practices towards a success of academic ventures between the two parties.
2. The Conference was attended by the Presidents, Rectors, Vice Chancellors and delegates of the 10 universities from P.R. China and the 26 AUN Member Universities from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The official representatives from ASEAN-China Center, Network of ASEAN-China Think Tanks, ASEAN Secretariat, AUN Secretariat and the Office of the Higher Education Commission, Thailand were also in attendance. The list of delegates appears as **Annex 1**.
3. The programme of the 4<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-China Rectors' Conference appears as **Annex 2**.

#### OPENING SESSION

4. Prof. Tan Chorh Chuan, President of National University of Singapore welcomed all participants to the 4<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-China Rectors' Conference and to National University of Singapore. He also hoped for a fruitful deliberation and concrete outcomes of the Conference.
5. The Conference composed of the following three main sessions
  - **Session A:** The Challenges of ASEAN-China Collaboration: from Government Policies to Implementation
  - **Session B:** The Strengthening of ASEAN-China Collaboration towards the Future Challenges
  - **Session C:** ASEAN-China Partnership and Future Roles of Higher Education Institutions: the Views from Various Stakeholders

## **SESSION A: THE CHALLENGES OF ASEAN-CHINA COLLABORATION FROM GOVERNMENT POLICIES TO IMPLEMENTATION**

6. There were two speakers for this session, 1) Prof. Dr. Yang Xiuping, Secretary-General of the ASEAN-China Center and 2) Prof. Qin Yaqing, President of China Foreign Affairs University and Chinese Country Coordinator for the Network of ASEAN-China Think-Tanks.
7. This session was deliberately designed to reflect the policy oriented towards ASEAN-China cooperation, identified by the ASEAN-China governments. Among others, both side agreed to further strengthen the ASEAN-China Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity which take focus on the 11 priority areas, namely, agriculture, information and communication technology, human resource development, investment, Makong Basin development, transportation, energy, culture, tourism, public health, and environment. The P.R. China also expressed its continued support for the implementation of the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity.
8. After the presentations, the floor was opened for Q&A in which the questions mainly addressed the supporting role of universities in boosting the number of exchange students between China-ASEAN and teaching of Chinese language which become more popular in ASEAN.

## **SESSION B: The STRENGTHENING OF ASEAN-CHINA COLLABORATION TOWARDS THE FUTURE CHALLENGES**

9. The presenter of this session was Dr. Choltis Dhirathiti, the AUN Deputy Executive Director. His presentation revealed the current cooperation between the ASEAN and China within the Network and identify priority areas of most important issues and interest among ASEAN and China. One of the highlights was the China policy on double 100,000 goal of student mobility by 2020. Regarding this, he mentioned that this policy would be mutually beneficial to the students of both sides if ASEAN and China could jointly consult and develop an implementation framework by incorporating multiple approaches and multiple players into the framework to be implemented by like-minded parties who would be governed by a set of common principles and objectives.
10. With regard to the framework objective, he stated that it should spell out specific objectives that the quantitative goal of Double 100,000 mobility of students will achieve. This will help address issues such as the nature, composition and quality of student outputs that will be produced by this initiative.
11. In summary, his suggestion was to develop a clear framework at the outset that identifies the following elements:
  - Principles
  - Objectives (based on countries' as well as the regional needs analysis)
  - Strategy (including on how to ensure Quality)
  - Multi-pronged implementation approaches and definition of roles of respective players/interested parties
  - Implementation, monitoring and review mechanism (including means by which the Goal will be measured)
  - Coordination focal points

- Information exchange and coordination mechanism
12. For Q&A, most of the questions and discussions were about the sharing experiences and success stories of the ASEAN universities who become the destination of Chinese students and vice versa. To attract foreign students, some universities offered a short term scholarship programme with full and partial supports to the students. Credit recognition at home universities were also possible for some courses.
  13. It was suggested that participating universities should create a mechanism to have a concrete cooperation to facilitate student mobility, in particular in terms of financial support and credit recognition. Policy support from the government was also important.

**SESSION C: ASEAN-CHINA PARTNERSHIP AND FUTURE ROLES OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: THE VIEWS FROM VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS**

14. There were two panelists in this session, 1) Prof. Andrew Wee, Vice-President for University and Global Relations, National University of Singapore and 2) Prof. Wu Zhipan, Executive Vice President, Peking University.
15. The objective of this session was to introduce an insightful vision of the two leading universities who have well recognised as the world class universities. The panelists emphasised that it was important for the new generation to be embedded with the sense of entrepreneurship, as well as entrepreneurial skill. For example, at NUS, they established an ecosystem of business environment for entrepreneurs to help students prepare their entrepreneurship after graduation or business start up in the future.
16. The questions about nurturing the next generation of young entrepreneurs, as well as the questions of Session A and Session B appear as **Annex 3.**