

## PM's remarks at the fifth East Asia Summit

October 30, 2010

I reaffirm India's commitment to the East Asia Summit process. India's engagement with South East and East Asia has been a pillar of our foreign policy since the 1990s. We have participated in each of the Summits and in the many sectoral meetings. India believes in the centrality of ASEAN's role in the EAS process.

This is a special Summit, marking the 5th Anniversary of the East Asia Summit. The EAS has come a long way since its first meeting in Kuala Lumpur in December 2005. Today, it has become an integral part of the regional architecture and a purposeful vehicle for community building in the region.

The EAS process has over the years grappled with immediate challenges such as disaster management and pandemics and energy security in 2007, the global economic crisis in 2008 and the climate change negotiations in 2009. This is in addition to the ongoing task of creating structures and institutions which lead to the overall goal of forging a wider Asian community encompassing the economic, political, security, social, cultural and people-to-people spheres.

The economic weight is shifting in favour of Asia, and it is seen as the engine of global growth. It has weathered the global economic crisis well. The EAS process is creating prosperity in the region, and helping to bridge gaps between sub-regions and nations in Asia. We are on the right track.

The theme of the Summit - **from vision to action** - is most appropriate. We need to move from policy declarations to greater functional cooperation.

I welcome the entry of the United States and Russia as participants in the EAS process. The EAS will benefit from their experience while remaining an ASEAN-led process.

I would like to complement the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) for their work in promoting regional integration by providing useful research and practical policy recommendations on regional connectivity, trade, investment, energy and the environment. ERIA has submitted a report on the Comprehensive Asian Development Plan (CADP) and identified three corridors for building infrastructure, connectivity and industrial activity that will support the realization of a community in the region. One of these is for a Mekong – India Economic Corridor.

Thanks to the collective efforts of G-20, the world economy has gradually stabilized even though the recovery remains fragile. Growth in developing countries would be greatly helped if threats of new protectionist measures in industrialized countries are firmly resisted and existing barriers to trade are reduced. Towards this end, a successful completion of the Doha Development Round of trade negotiations is important.

India welcomes further progress on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement for East Asia (CEPEA) process. Till last year we had signed CEPA Agreements with Singapore and ROK and a Trade in Goods Agreement with the ASEAN. In the last one year we have completed negotiations on a CEPA with Japan and Malaysia. An Agreement on Trade in Services and Investment is under negotiation with the ASEAN.

Forthcoming G-20 Summit in Seoul should focus on development. I am happy that development has been included as an item for discussion.

Indian economy is expected to grow at the rate of 8.5% this year. We hope to achieve a growth rate of 9.10% next year. This will encourage two way trade between India and ASEAN Member States.

We welcome the first meeting of the ASEAN Defence Ministers Plus Eight in Hanoi earlier this month. India supports practical and pragmatic cooperation through this new forum by building trust and confidence among all countries. We believe that in a step by step process, at a pace comfortable to all, this forum can make a meaningful contribution to building open and transparent security architecture in the Asia-Pacific region.

Tackling the growing threats to security – non-State actors, security of sea-lanes, piracy, human trafficking,

terrorism and protection of global commons – would require concerted response.

At the 4th East Asia Summit, EAS member countries had supported the establishment of the University as a non-state, non-profit, secular and self-governing international institution to bring together the brightest and the best in East Asia. I am happy to report that the Nalanda University Bill has been passed by both Houses of the Indian Parliament earlier this year. The Nalanda Mentor Group (headed by Nobel Laureate Dr. Amartya Sen) will act as the interim Governing Board of the University till such time as the members of the Governing Board have been nominated. The statutes of the University are being drafted. Land has been acquired for the University. We invite EAS member countries to participate in the Nalanda University project. I hope that Nalanda University will be an important element in the community that we hope to build in the East Asian region.

India supports a collaborative approach to energy issues. Our present energy policy involves adopting a multi-pronged strategy by broadening our energy mix, including nuclear energy.

We want positive outcome in Cancun at the 16th Conference of Parties. It should build upon the Copenhagen Accord. India is doing everything possible within the limitation of her own resources to contribute to the global action on climate change. Under our ambitious National Action Plan on Climate Change, we have embarked upon measures to improve energy efficiency, reduce energy intensity and enhance the share of renewable energy in the energy mix.

We listened with great interest to remarks of the President of the Asian Development Bank. In near future, we believe that Asia's growth and intra-ASEAN trade can make an important contribution to global recovery.

**Hanoi**

**October 30, 2010**