ASIA-EUROPE MEETING

SUMMARY OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING FOR ASEM LANGUAGE DIVERSITY FORUM

Bali, Indonesia,
28-29 November 2011

The Steering Committee Meeting for ASEM Language Diversity Forum (ASEM LDF) was convened in Bali, 28-29 November 2011, and attended by representatives from France, India, Indonesia, Thailand, Viet Nam, and Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF). Lao PDR, host of the next ASEM Summit in 2012, participated in the meeting as observer (List of Participants is attached as Annex I)

Taking note of the diversity in the ASEM region, the Meeting appreciated the initiative of Indonesia to hold this Forum reflecting the concerns and interest of ASEM Partners in the safeguarding and promoting language diversity towards sustainable development. Indonesia, supported by Vietnam, announced the initiative during the ASEM SOM in Tokyo, October 2011.

The Meeting had a fruitful discussion on the preparation of the ASEM LDF and approved the following arrangements:

a. The ASEM LDF is going to be held in Indonesia, tentatively in September 2012, prior to the 5th ASEM Culture Ministers' Meeting.

b. The general theme for the ASEM LDF 2012 is *"Safeguarding and Promoting Language Diversity in Asia and Europe towards Sustainable Development".* This theme is expected to generate in-depth discussion on the significance of language diversity to socio-economic, cultural and educational issues in Asia and Europe.

c. The ASEM LDF aims to identify strategies and cooperation among ASEM Partners in safeguarding and promoting language diversity in Asia and Europe on four topics, as follows:
    i. Language diversity policies and issues in Asia and Europe
    ii. Exchange of best practices in safeguarding and promoting language and cultural diversity in Asia and Europe
    iii. Strategies in protecting and promoting language diversity in relation to sustainable economic development in Asia and Europe.
    iv. The role of media and ICT in safeguarding and promoting language diversity in Asia and Europe.

<u>Language diversity policies and issues in Asia and Europe</u>

The world's language situation is complex and thus language policy and planning needs to be formulated according to relevant situation in each country. Policy considerations need to include pressing questions such as how to respond to the loss of local or endangered languages. Despite the language situations found in Europe and Asia being fundamentally different, both areas are affected by the effects of globalization. Under this topic, speakers can explore language rights

and the role of language diversity policies in connection to identity and adding to cultural diversity in society. Furthermore, the discussion may also focus on the strategies in safeguarding and promoting local or endangered languages, how they adapt to global languages, as well as their correlation with sustainable development.

Exchange of best practices in safeguarding and promoting language and cultural diversity in Asia and Europe

Language diversity is related to cultural identity. Much of the intangible cultural heritage and cultural diversity in both Asia and Europe depends on the sustainment of language diversity as its vehicle. If language diversity disappears then much of this cultural heritage will undergo a shift in values and significance, or even disappear completely. The significance and the intertwinement between language and cultural diversity are cited in the Chairman's Statement of the 1st ASEM Culture Ministers' Meeting in 2003, the 2003 UNESCO *Convention in Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritages* and the 2005 UNESCO *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*. Under this topic, the discussion may generate joint-initiatives related to the preservation and promotion of local/endangered languages.

Strategies in protecting and promoting language diversity in relation to sustainable economic development in Asia and Europe.

It is a fact that: 1)economic growth and development may affect language diversity, 2) the use of a global language can enhance economic growth and development because people will communicate better, 3) local languages may become assets within the process of globalisation. Therefore, the discussion under this topic may address case studies such as issues faced by a multilingual community, local wisdom preserved in local languages, language diversity in relation to creative economy, and minority language education programs.

The role of media and ICT in safeguarding and promoting language diversity in Asia and Europe.

Media and other ICT based media have increased people-to-people interaction as well as communication among societies in a globalized world. Taking into consideration of this development, there is a need to explore ways and best practices to maximize the role of the media and ICT in the efforts to safeguard and promote language diversity in Asia and Europe. This topic may focus on the establishment of joint ICT initiatives to safeguard and promote language diversity.

d. The Steering Committee proposed the following suggestions to increase the significance of the Forum:

   i. In order to have a much broader impact, the ASEM LDF needs to focus on language diversity in its relation with the socio-economic issues.
   ii. To receive more input and take into account the cross-cultural aspects of language diversity, with the consent of ASEM Partner governments, relevant experts and institutions/think-tanks may be invited to participate in the ASEM LDF.
   iii. The ASEM LDF will identify related regional and/or international programs and research on language diversity, such as UNESCO's Management of Social Transformation (MOST) Program.

e. ASEM Partners are invited to co-sponsor by either dispatching representatives as speakers, covering the expenses of speakers from other ASEM Partner, or sponsoring a side event.

f. The Meeting accepted the preliminary tentative programme of the ASEM LDF and will provide further input in due time (tentative programme is attached as Annex II).

g. The output of ASEM Language Diversity Forum is planned to be submitted to the 5th ASEM Culture Ministers' Meeting in Indonesia, September 2012 and to the 4th ASEM Education Ministers Meeting in Malaysia, 2013.

The Meeting took note of this Summary and, if necessary, may hold a 2nd Steering Committee Meeting for ASEM LDF on the first half of 2012.

Bali, 29 November 2011