

JOINT STATEMENT OF THE 8TH CHINA-JAPAN-KOREA MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS

August 20, 2021

- 1.** We, the Transport and Logistics Ministers of China, Japan, and Korea, held the 8th Ministerial Conference on Transport and Logistics online on August 20, 2021. We appreciated the progress of the Action Plans during the previous seven Ministerial Conferences, rearranged the major goals and the Action Plans, taking the impact of COVID-19 on international logistics into consideration, and encouraged continuous achievements of the Action Plans.
- 2.1.** We recognized that the three countries play a critical role in the development of the world economy and trade. The total aggregated GDP of the three countries is approximately 25.3% of the world economy in 2020 (IMF), and the trade value generated by the three countries amounted to approximately USD 6,456 billion, accounting for 18.7% of the world total in 2020 (IMF).
- 2.2.** With the rapid development of the cross-border supply chain, we recognized that logistics plays an important role in the three countries' increasingly close economic interdependence. We also recognized that trilateral cooperation in the field of transport and logistics would contribute to the development of industries in each country and lead to mutually beneficial trilateral relations.
- 3.1.** Although nearly one and a half years have passed since the World Health Organization declared a pandemic and vaccinations are underway, COVID-19 cases/deaths are still increasing around the world. We express our deepest condolences for all those who lost their lives and convey our sincerest sympathies for the many people that suffered.
- 3.2.** COVID-19 had a major impact on international logistics. For example, the significant reduction in passenger flights led to a tightening of air transport space. Some factors such as rapid growth in transport demand and significant efficiency reduction in maritime supply chain led to a shortage of international maritime transport containers and transport space.
- 3.3.** We present our sincerest appreciation and respect to the logistics workers at the forefront of logistics who have been making dedicated efforts to secure the supply

chain and to support people's lives and economic activities.

- 3.4.** With a view to confirming and strengthening cooperation among the three countries in securing and maintaining a steady and smooth logistics system against the backdrop of COVID-19, we held the Special Session of this Ministerial Conference and adopted the Joint Statement on June 29, 2020.
- 3.5.** Given the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on logistics, we recognized the importance of a common understanding of the state of logistics and showing the paths towards a resilient logistics network among the three countries at this moment.
- 4.1.** Since the 1st Ministerial Conference in 2006, we have identified and carried out the Action Plans under the three major goals for logistics cooperation: "Creation of a Seamless Logistics System," "Establishment of Environmentally Friendly Logistics" and "Achievement of Balance between Security and Efficiency of Logistics."
- 4.2.** Considering the fact that international logistics was disrupted by COVID-19 and the resilience of the supply chain was recognized as an important policy issue, we decided to set "Promotion of a Resilient Logistics Network" as a new major goal, taking over "Achievement of Balance between Security and Efficiency of Logistics."
- 4.3.** We also rearranged the Action Plans according to the major goals at this Ministerial Conference, thereby further specifying the nature of trilateral cooperation.
- 4.4.** The Joint Action Plans will be "Cooperation and Coordination among the Three Countries toward a Resilient Logistics Network" and "Promoting Digital Transformation (DX) in Logistics." The rest of Action Plans will be respectively led by China, Japan and Korea.
- 4.5.** China will continue to lead "Efforts to Establish and Expand an Inter-Connected Logistics Information Network," "Best Practice Sharing and Cooperative Development of the Intermodal Transport in Northeast Asia" and "Promoting Close Cooperative Relations for Ports Sector."
- 4.6.** Japan will continue to lead "Standardization of Transport Items," "Efforts to Realize the Seamless Logistics System" and "Introducing Environmentally Friendly Logistics Policies."

4.7. Korea will continue to lead “Measures to Balance between Logistics Security and Efficiency,” “Promoting Information Sharing and Cooperation on Sustainable Arctic Shipping” and “Logistics and Facilitating Trilateral Cold Chain Network.”

5. Promotion of a Resilient Logistics Network

The disruption by COVID-19 in logistics, mainly in the areas of maritime and air transport, caused damage to the supply chain, which we had taken for granted, and reminded us of the importance of securing a resilient logistics network.

5.1. We will strive to secure a resilient logistics network by strengthening cooperation among the three countries. We recognize the importance of the coordination in international logistics policies to address challenges that hinder the achievement of this goal and encourage our officials to continue to share experiences and best practices in international and domestic logistics policies with each other.

5.2. We will promote information-sharing on logistics security and studies on logistics security technologies in the three countries in order to improve the safety and efficiency of logistics.

6. Creation of a Seamless Logistics System

With the progress of technological innovation and the spread of new lifestyles triggered by COVID-19, the seamless logistics that we have been working on since the 1st Ministerial Conference has become increasingly important, and there is benefit in the continued promotion of such efforts.

6.1. Recognizing the importance of Digital Transformation (DX) in Logistics that will dramatically change the nature of logistics through automation and digitalization, we will promote the development of the transport and logistics sectors and ensure that the three countries play a leading role in this field.

6.2. In order to promote Digital Transformation (DX) in Logistics, it is important to standardize each element of logistics as a prerequisite. We recognize that standardization of logistics leads to optimization of the entire supply chain, and from this perspective, we appreciate the achievements on the standardization of pallets by the Asian Pallet System Federation (APSF). We will continue to cooperate for the standardization of logistics items including pallets in the three countries.

- 6.3.** We noted the expansion of the international cold chain network and an increase in the volume of fresh produce transport in response to lifestyle changes caused by COVID-19, and shared the view that a smooth cold chain network leads to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by improving food safety and reducing food waste. To this end, we will cooperate on international standardization in the field of cold chain and encourage the implementation of joint studies.
- 6.4.** We recognized that mutual access of trailer chassis enables speedy and quality sea-land intermodal transport, thus improving connectivity among the three countries. In this regard, we will endeavor to promote mutual access of trailer chassis, taking needs of the private sector into consideration.
- 6.5.** We will continue to expand the coverage of ports participating in the information-sharing network and strengthen cooperation with ports in other regions in order to further enhance the information-sharing services in the NEAL-NET. We will also work to improve services based on the needs of NEAL-NET users in Asia and to strengthen connections with other transport modes.
- 6.6.** In order to determine the future direction of sea-land intermodal transport of containers and the nature of cooperation among the three countries, the three countries will research the current status and issues of sea-land intermodal transport and share information.

7. Establishment of Environmentally Friendly Logistics

As the leaders of the three countries expressed the goal of carbon neutrality in 2020, and social awareness of the need to address the SDGs is growing, it is getting more important to build a sustainable logistics network.

- 7.1.** We will be looking for ways to establish environmentally friendly logistics. We recognized that carbon neutrality is a shared goal among the three countries. We will work to ensure the sustainability of the global environment by further improving the efficiency of logistics through promoting modal shifts, and by promoting carbon neutrality in each mode of transport and logistics facilities. We will enhance trilateral and public-private cooperation through sharing of policies in each country and strengthening joint studies for environmentally friendly logistics.

- 7.2.** We recognized that the use of Returnable Transport Items (RTI) would greatly contribute to reducing logistics costs with an eco-friendly logistics system, and we will cooperate in addressing the issues that hinder the expansion of RTI use.
- 8.1.** We reaffirmed the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat (TCS)'s role in advancing trilateral cooperation and expressed support for the broader participation of TCS in the trilateral transport and logistics mechanism. TCS celebrates its 10th anniversary this year and has held many events to promote cooperation among the three countries.
- 8.2.** We have started the operation of our official website on August 6, 2021 with full support from TCS. Through the official website, we will share the achievements of the past 15 years, facilitate cooperation and coordination among the three countries, exchange the three countries' policy and research. The website will also enable the people of the three countries to better access the information of the Ministerial Conference.
- 9.** The next Ministerial Conference will be hosted by China.
- 10.** The Ministry of Transport of China and the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of Korea expressed their appreciation to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism of Japan and the City of Kobe, for hosting this Ministerial Conference.