

institutions play a pivotal role, regional cooperation can also be very useful in complementing efforts by these institutions to promote financial stability. In this connection, we welcome the substantial progress in implementing the Chiang Mai Initiative to strengthen cooperative financing arrangements among the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries and China, Japan and the Republic of Korea. We also note the ongoing work in the Manila Framework Group. We support all these efforts and urge them to be strengthened.

9. The current economic slowdown underlines, above all, the importance of APEC's work towards more open and stronger economies. We reaffirm our unyielding commitment to free and open trade and investment and resolve to work together to fight against protectionism in all forms. We render the strongest support for an open, equitable and rules-based Multilateral Trading System, which is essential to sustain global economic growth. APEC must also stay on track with its own agenda on trade and investment and on capacity building.

Sharing the Benefits of Globalization and the New Economy

10. We are convinced that globalization is a powerful vehicle that stimulates economic growth, and holds great promises for delivering higher living standards to people and improving social well-being for our communities. We acknowledge that the New Economy has broad potential to raise productivity, stimulate innovation in economic organization and entrepreneurship, and create and disseminate knowledge and wealth. However, the opportunities arising from these processes are not sufficiently shared among and even within economies. Hence the need to enable all individuals in our communities to benefit from them. We emphasize the importance of capacity building, both human and institutional, as a key answer to the challenges and opportunities of globalization and the New Economy. Capacity building constitutes a key element of the balanced approach essential to the success of APEC along with market opening and full participation.
11. In this context, we reiterate that human capacity building (HCB) remains a central theme this year and the years ahead. We commend the success of the High-Level Meeting on Human Capacity Building, and welcome the Beijing Initiative as a comprehensive set of principles for human capacity building, which also provides opportunities for further work in the New Economy. We call on APEC fora and member economies to undertake follow-up activities in specific areas of their interest in the spirit of developed and developing economies complementing each other. We support the engagement of all key stakeholders in the region and, in particular, the establishment of the partnership of government, business, academic and training institutions for this purpose. We welcome the