**Statement of H.E. Mr. Igor Morgulov at the Second ACD Summit**

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished participants,

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to the Thai hosts for the warm welcome and outstanding organization of the meeting.

The present-day stage of development is marked with the dynamic shaping of a polycentric world order, which reflects the diversity of civilizations and broad involvement of all regions in the global processes. We are witnessing unprecedented growth of interdependence and interpenetration at all levels and in all spheres.

A sophisticated configuration of integration and dialogue formats is intensively taking shape in the Asia-Pacific region. Over the recent decades, the region has seen the establishment of several dozen of associations and fora, which provide opportunities for cooperation on a wide range of issues. Interaction between the member-states of the Eurasian Economic Union, ASEAN and various ASEAN-centric formats, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, APEC and new multilateral financial institutions like New BRICS Bank and AIIB is increasing in scope and improving in quality. It is important to mention that this cooperation is evolving in accordance with the norms of the international law and such principles as non-interference into internal affairs of sovereign states, respect for diversity of cultures and traditions, and recognition of the right of each country to choose its own model of development.

We are convinced that identifying the right priorities may enable existing regional mechanisms to function as a single coherent system enriching each other. Among the key structures in Asia, we are listing SCO, which is now expanding, ASEAN and ASEAN-related dialogue mechanisms such as the East Asia Summits, ASEAN Regional Forum etc.

We highly appreciate the efforts undertaken by Thailand as the ACD Chair in order to give a new impetus to this forum. I am confident that the current Summit will expedite the ACD’s search for its niche on the saturated «market» of regional groupings. In our opinion, this work needs healthy pragmatism in the interest of concentration, not dilution, of regional efforts. More specifically, at this stage we should identify the most promising areas of cooperation within the ACD.

In particular, we believe it is necessary to focus on strengthening connectivity and on establishing sustainable business and cultural links among member-countries.

The decision to optimize the number of priority areas of cooperation taken at the Ministerial Meeting last March was an important step towards the enhancement of the ACD. Our next step now should be establishing relative Working Groups, which will identify further practical measures to increase cooperation in the defined pillars.

Russia consistently advocates a deeper regional integration as the main tool for the development of a profoundly interconnected space as a short-term goal and of a single Eurasian economic space in the long term. Such measures should complement the existing international trade and economic ties developing under the universal WTO rules.

This is our basic approach towards the Eurasian integration project. The Eurasian Economic Union, which is reaching out for other integration mechanisms, is emerging as a significant factor of the lasting growth. We are making efforts to create a single economic space both in the East and in the West. The initiative of the President Vladimir Putin to forge a greater economic partnership involving EAEU, SCO and ASEAN offers immense prospects. We register a positive reaction to it from our partners in the Asia-Pacific region.

To promote practical cooperation we need efficient transport corridors. Russia is working hard to create a streamlined transport and logistics network in Europe and in Asia, and to diversify cargo supply chains from Asia to Europe and vice versa. Efforts to upgrade the Baikal-Amur Railway and the Trans-Siberian Railways are in full swing. We are also taking measures to ensure comprehensive development of the Northern Sea Route.

Energy security is another key priority of the Russia’s policy in the Asia-Pacific. Our country is a reliable supplier of energy resources to its partners who regard energy as a substantial factor of growth. The implementation of the so-called «Asian Energy Ring» project, which implies electricity transmission from the Russian Far East to the Asia-Pacific countries, might become a tangible contribution to regional energy security. We have no doubt that this is very topical for ACD too.

Promotion of innovative and technological cooperation is another important area. Russia possesses considerable scientific and technical potential and contributes to global technological development, including through its academic and industrial cooperation with other countries.

All these measures are in harmony with the interests of our Asian neighbors. The broadest opportunities lie before us. We look forward to mutually beneficial cooperation with the regional community in harnessing them. It is our strong belief that by building upon their respective competitive advantages, the ACD countries can bring about a new quality of economic growth and stability in the region.