

Youth Statement for the Asia and Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for Rio+20

1. We, the youth in Member States of East and North-East Asia, had the privilege to participate in the 1st UNESCAP Subregional Forum for Youth Participation in Policy-Making for East and North-East Asia held on 15-17 August, 2011 in Gyeonggi Province, Republic of Korea. The Forum provided opportunity for the youth to discuss pressing socio-economic issues of the subregion: 1) gross national happiness; 2) sustainable development; and 3) youth unemployment.
2. Seventy youth from China, Japan, Mongolia, Republic of Korea, and Russian Federation shared a good practice of collaboration among youth organizations and policy-making bodies, and introduced their own method of approaching main problems facing the subregion.
3. The youth participants, who were in the group addressing the issue of sustainable development, touched upon very insightful and influencing discussions on three main pillars of sustainable development, namely economic, social and environmental.
4. In order to produce specific plans and propose concrete policy measures, group members narrowed down various topics into three main areas-climate change and sustainable energy, sustainable infrastructure, and social dimension of sustainable development. An action plan focusing on increased youth participation and contribution on the three key areas of sustainable development was formulated.
5. The participants came to the conclusion that to achieve tangible results in North-East Asia more coordinated action should be accomplished at the subregional level.
6. As universities have been recognized as entities that emit high levels of greenhouse gases (GHGs), making a negative impact on sustainable development, following key suggestions were made to respective policy makers in order to address this issue:
 - (a) Implementation of universal education in sustainable development, which includes the promotion of youth participation in environmental activities by introducing “environmental service hours” as part of the course requirement;
 - (b) Establishment of subregional ranking of “green universities” to raise public awareness and prestige of universities, which have made efforts to reduce the level of greenhouse gas (GHGs) and the application of “green ranking” to the general ranking of colleges.
7. To ensure our ideas and objectives from the forum are met even after its conclusion, we request:
 - (a) The UN to create a “North-East Asian Green University Award” to recognize universities that have made exceptional efforts in reducing GHGs in their respective countries;
 - (b) National governments to provide grants and/or subsidies to students from environment related majors to provide incentives for more students to pursue education in the field;
 - (c) Governments to provide easier access to information related to sustainable development;
8. In addition, the youth will take the following actions in order to address issues, concerning

sustainable development in our respective countries:

(a) Plan and implement peer-to-peer education through organizing and holding educational youth camps, leadership workshops and so on;

(b) Become the bridge between policy makers and society by monitoring advancements made in the field of sustainable development and informing the public;

(c) Connect with policy makers of our respective countries and create partnerships and forums where a frequent exchange of ideas on sustainable development issues would be achieved;

(d) Create both local and international university networks to share information, adopt common agendas and standards and transfer cross-border knowledge and technology amongst students;

(e) Promote and support the achievement of “green campuses” by creating youth groups on university campuses, maximize the usage of ICT in informing students of university status and their activities toward environment;

(f) Create “green tourism” on university campuses supporting sustainable development for the education of the general public;

(g) Hosting “eco-fairs” not only at local university and community level, but also internationally;

9. As youths hold the key to a brighter future, we can play a vital role in advocating various messages to the community through our active participation to address common issues for the benefit of the present and future generations. Thus, we commit to follow up on the actions that have been proposed during the forum and adopt an eco-friendly lifestyle in our respective countries.

10. We are aware of the importance of sustainable networking to update ourselves on new activities that we committed to implement during the forum in the places we live in. For this, we will be using social networking tools, such as Facebook, Twitter and Youtube.

11. We are confident that our active participation and effort to contribute in the field of sustainable development will bring positive outcomes and will be sustained to engage and empower more youth in the future.

We are one big family, holding a common goal and willingness to address main issues in the region, particularly sustainable development!