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REVIEW OF PROGRAMME PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

(Item 5 (a) of the provisional agenda)

Transboundary Air Pollution

Note by the Secretariat

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I. BACKGROUND

1. The deliberation of addressing the transboundary air pollution challenge in North-East Asia under NEASPEC has begun with technical assistance projects in 1996 focusing on air pollution mitigation from coal-fired power plants. Since then, member States have carried out a series of projects and intergovernmental consultations to explore the approaches and modalities for strengthening the subregional cooperation on air pollution. The project implemented during 2014-2017 on the “Development of the Technical and Policy Frameworks for Transboundary Air Pollution Assessment and Abatement in North-East Asia” was instrumental in assessing viable options for establishing a science-based, policy-oriented cooperation framework to assess and mitigate transboundary air pollution in North-East Asia.

2. Following to the successful implementation of the project, member States at the 22nd Senior Officials Meeting (SOM-22) in October 2018 launched the North-East Asia Clean Air Partnership (NEACAP), as a science-based, and policy-oriented programme under NEASPEC. The NEACAP is aimed to ensure the protection of the environment and human health from air pollution in North-East Asia with the objectives to: promote environment cooperation, including its science, policy and technical aspects, on atmospheric air protection; enhance and further develop information and experience exchange in national and transboundary air pollution matters; act as the key voluntary framework in addressing transboundary air pollution issue in North-East Asia; contribute, as appropriate, to the development of relevant national and subregional policies addressing air pollution based on regional and national scientific research; and promote knowledge on environmental and human health aspects of air pollution in the North-East Asian subregion.

3. The operation of NEACAP is in line with and will further strengthen the efforts made by member States on tackling air pollution through subregional scientific and technological cooperation. For example, the State Council of China extended the air pollutant control measures in the “Air Pollution Prevention and Control Action Plan (2013 – 2017)”¹ and released a “Three-year Action Plan for Winning the Blue-Sky War”² in June 2018 with specific targets for improving the air quality in China by 2020, including to reduce emissions from sulfur dioxide (SO₂) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x), respectively, by at least 15%, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) emissions by 10% from the 2015 levels by 2020. For cities where the existing fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) standards were not met in the previous cycle, the urban concentration of PM_{2.5} is targeted to decrease by at least 18%, highly polluted days to decrease by at least 25%, and the annual number of days with fairly good air quality to increase at least 80% compared with 2015.

¹ http://www.gov.cn/zwggk/2013-09/12/content_2486773.htm

² http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2018-07/03/content_5303158.htm

4. In Mongolia, following to the National Programme for Reducing Air and Environmental Pollution (2017-2025) that aims to decrease air pollution by 80% by 2025, the government issued a ban on raw coal burning in May 2019 in the capital city Ulaanbaatar, where nearly half of the country's population resides. This policy is targeting the air pollution and health impacts caused by inefficient burning raw coal for heating in some 220,000 traditional dwellings in the ger districts, which is estimated contributing to about 80% of air pollution in the winter months in Ulaanbaatar.

5. The Republic of Korea announced in 2017 to decrease PM_{2.5} by 30% from 2014 levels by 2022 with sectoral targets for industry, transport, electricity and household, and established a new national coordination mechanism, National Council on Climate and Air Quality in 2019, which encompasses ministers from six ministries, and representatives from municipal government, political parties, academia, civil society organizations, and the business sectors. The Council also facilitates the deliberative participation of about 500 individual citizens representing diverse groups of the population to develop policies reflecting views of the public and enhance social acceptance of policy measures.

6. NEASPEC member States also played an instrumental role in adopting an ESCAP resolution on "Strengthening regional cooperation to tackle air pollution challenges in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/RES/75/4)" at the 75th Commission Session in May 2019, which acknowledges the efforts of member States on the launch of NEACAP. The resolution is contained in Annex IV of the present document.

7. The resolution encourages all members and associated members of ESCAP to strengthen domestic policies and measures to reduce air pollution and mitigate the impacts of air pollution on human health; invites all members and associated members to share experiences of subregional and regional cooperation; invites member States to strengthen efforts to foster sustainable and environmentally sound development and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to tackle air pollution challenges.

II. FIRST MEETING OF NORTH-EAST ASIA CLEAN AIR PARTNERSHIP SCIENCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

6. Upon member States' nomination of members of Science and Policy Committee (SPC) and Technical Centers (TC) of NEACAP, the first Meeting of NEACAP SPC and TC was held on 5 July 2019 in Seoul, Republic of Korea, following to a Roundtable on the Future of NEACAP held on 4 July 2019 joined by resource persons and eminent experts. The list of Committee members and participants is attached in Annex I.

7. The meeting considered issues related to the work programme, operational workplan and institutional arrangements of NEACAP. The discussions on the work

programme considered the approaches and modalities elaborated in the Discussion Paper as contained in Annex III, which include a) Common information basis: Emission Inventory; b) Consensual knowledge through interdisciplinary studies: Scientific Assessment Report; c) Policy goals and measures: Integrated Assessment Modeling; and d) Policy experience and technology information: Policy Dialogues.

8. On NEACAP Emission Inventory, the meeting reviewed the expected work of NEACAP on building a common information basis of air pollution emissions and related factors to support scientific assessment, policy dialogue and technical cooperation. Despite the existence of multiple regional emission inventories covering the geographical domain of NEACAP members, a more comprehensive dataset that includes both emission data and socio-economic parameters to enable more accurate scientific assessment and support policy development. Thus, meeting reviewed the need for developing the NEACAP Emission Inventory that provides accurate, complete and up-to-date data for supporting the NEACAP work as well as providing data for studies by research and academic institutions.

9. On Scientific Assessment Report, noting the increasing level of scientific studies on air pollution in North-East Asian countries in the recent years, the meeting discussed NEACAP scientific assessment report as (a) an open and institutionalized platform for interdisciplinary studies that supports building consensual knowledge among wider groups of experts, policy makers and other stakeholders, and (b) as a key reference for policy and technical cooperation in North-East Asia.

10. On Integrated Assessment Modeling (IAM), the meeting recognized the pivotal role of IAM in formulating science-based policy-oriented cooperation, particularly, in identifying emission reduction pathways and cost-effective options for emission control and reduction. The meeting also heard extensive experience shared by the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP), and discussed the importance of reliable emission inventory, information and data exchange, an agreed methodology and process, and utilizing the capacities from diverse modeling groups.

11. On Policy Dialogues, the meeting considered the ongoing process and related research work under the Tripartite Policy Dialogue on Air Pollution (TPDAP) among China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, the recent Tripartite Environment Minister Meetings (TEMM), and the programme of Best Available Techniques (BAT) in Europe as a key approach to information exchange and guideline on emission control technologies.

12. The main conclusion of the meeting includes the following, and conclusion report is contained in Annex I to the present document:

- i. **Emission Inventory:** The SPC meeting agreed to establish a Working Group on Emission Inventory (WGEI) to develop the draft framework and relevant methodology

for NEACAP Emission Inventory to be submitted to the next SPC meeting for consideration.

- ii. **Scientific Assessment Report:** The SPC meeting recommended the Secretariat to take an incremental approach to develop the report with the first edition taking stock of the existing national reports and studies on the state of the air in the subregion, and to extend to assessment of air pollution impact and policy effectiveness later. The meeting also suggested the Secretariat to engage experts to develop the report and involve SPC members and other stakeholders in the process.
- iii. **Integrated Assessment Modeling:** The SPC meeting agreed to initiate the work on IAM with the approach of multiple models to enhance the credibility of outcomes as reference policy and technical cooperation, and to establish a Working Group on IAM (WGIAM) to prepare the detail workplan.
- iv. **Policy Dialogues:** The SPC meeting suggested to further explore the approaches and modalities of policy dialogue under NEACAP, taking account tripartite cooperation and dialogues among China, Japan and the Republic of Korea (TPDAP), Clean Air Asia (CAA), Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership (APCAP) and Better Air Quality (BAQ) Conference. SPC-1 also recommended NEACAP to utilize the outcomes of the scientific assessment report and IAM.
- v. **Regarding the institutional arrangements,** the SPC meeting requested the Secretariat to develop draft Terms of Reference (TOR) for the NEACAP SPC, the Working Groups and Technical Centers to define their respective roles and responsibilities, and to circulate the draft TOR and nomination form of the Working Group members to the SPC for endorsement.
- vi. **Regarding the operational workplan of NEACAP,** the SPC meeting requested the Secretariat to organize meetings of the two Working Groups by the first quarter of 2020 for programme planning and present a detailed draft workplan for 2020-2022 to the next SPC meeting.

III. OVERALL PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTING THE CORE PROGRAMMES

13. Following to the conclusion of the SPC meeting, the Secretariat prepared the draft Rules of Procedure for the NEACAP SPC, the Working Groups and Technical Centers and incorporated views of SPC and TC members as presented in Annex II for the discussion and decision by the SOM-23. The term, Rules of Procedure, is proposed to differentiate it with the NEACAP Terms of Reference.

14. Based on the nominations of working group members by SPC members, the Secretariat plans to hold the first meeting of the Working Group on Emission Inventory (WGEI) and the Working Group on Integrated Assessment Modeling (WGIAM) by early 2020 to develop detailed plans and draft methodological frameworks as the key part of the NEACAP workplan for 2020–2022.

15. To follow the conclusion and recommendation of the SPC meeting on building consensual knowledge among diverse stakeholders, the Secretariat will work on the draft of the first scientific assessment report focusing on reviewing the existing national reports and studies on the state of air in North-East Asia.

16. Following to the recommendation of the SPC meeting to further explore the approaches and modalities of policy dialogue under NEACAP, the Secretariat would like to seek further guidance from member States at the present Meeting on implementing the programme on policy dialogue.

17. A tentative timeline is proposed below:

Table 1. Tentative timeline for Developing the NEACAP programmes

Time	Activities
Oct – Dec 2019	Prepare draft workplan and methodological framework on Emission Inventory and IAM
Oct – Dec 2019	Nomination of WGEI and WGIAM members
January 2020	Organize first meetings of WGEI and WGIAM on the workplan and methodological framework
Jan – March 2020	Further elaborate the draft workplan and methodological framework
March – April 2020	Develop draft NEACAP workplan 2020 – 2022 based on the WGEI and WGIAM workplan
May – June 2020	Circulate the draft NEACAP workplan to the Science and Policy Committee
July 2020	Hold the 2 nd SPC Meeting to review and finalize the workplan
Aug – Sep 2020	Circulate the workplan together with budget plan to member governments for decision at the SOM-24.
Scientific Assessment Report, “the State of Air in North-East Asia”	
October 2019 – June 2020	Review national reports and studies on air pollution in North-East Asia and develop the first draft of Scientific Assessment Report

July 2020	Review the draft by the SPC Meeting
Aug – Sep 2020	Finalize the report

IV. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

18. Noting the discussion at and outcome of the Roundtable and First Meeting of the NEACAP Science and Policy Committee and Technical Center, the Meeting may wish to adopt the conclusion report (Annex I) and the draft Rules of Procedure for the NEACAP Science and Policy Committee, Technical Centers and Working Groups (Annex II).

19. The Meeting may wish to share the view on the overall plan for implementing the core programmes (Table 1).

20. The Meeting may wish to request member States to provide further guidance and support on the proper arrangements and operational workplan of NEACAP (2020-2022), including to express interest in hosting future NEACAP SPC meetings, and collaboration with Technical Centers and relevant mechanisms.

21. The Meeting may wish to request member States to announce their intended contributions to the work of NEACAP.

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