

UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Twenty-third Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of NEASPEC

09-10 October 2019

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

**REPORT OF THE TWENTY-THIRD SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING
OF THE NORTH-EAST ASIAN SUBREGIONAL PROGRAMME FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION**

1. The Twenty-Third Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of NEASPEC was held in Ulaanbaatar on 09-10 October 2019. The Meeting was organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) East and North-East Asia Office serving as NEASPEC Secretariat and was generously hosted by the Government of Mongolia.

I. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

2. The Meeting commended the contribution of NEASPEC to deepening practical cooperation among member States, promoting science-policy linkages and serving as a key platform for information and experience sharing among stakeholders and between member States. The Meeting also underlined the linkage with and contribution of NEASPEC to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the ESCAP Regional Roadmap for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific.

3. **Transboundary Air Pollution:** The Meeting noted the report of the First Meeting of the North-East Asia Clean Air Partnership (NEACAP) Science and Policy Committee (SPC) and Technical Centers held on 4-5 July 2019. The Meeting requested the SPC to initiate extensive discussions as soon as possible but not later than the first quarter of 2020 on the priority areas of its future work and if possible workplans for the priority areas to be provisionally agreed upon by member States in advance of the next SOM through an arrangement proposed by the Secretariat and agreed upon by member States, and submit their recommendation to the next SOM for the consideration. The Meeting also noted the proposal of Mongolia for hosting the next SPC meeting in Ulaanbaatar.

4. The Meeting endorsed the Rules of Procedures (ROP) of the SPC¹ while the ROP for working groups and technical centers will be further discussed.
5. **Nature Conservation:** The Meeting noted significant progress in bilateral efforts of China and the Russian Federation towards building transboundary protected areas for Amur tigers and leopards, and commended the contribution of the International Forum on Tiger and Leopard Transboundary Conservation held in July 2019 and its outcome, the Harbin Consensus, to identify areas of new scientific cooperation in support of the bilateral efforts on the development of new projects. In this connection, the Meeting endorsed (pending finalization of necessary internal approval process by related government) two projects on Sino-Russian transboundary protected area and feasibility study in Lesser Khingan, respectively. The Meeting also noted the significant contribution of NEASPEC work to the introduction of camera trapping technique for Snow Leopard monitoring in Mongolia and approved a project on assessing the current status of snow leopards in bordering areas between Mongolia and the Russian Federation.
6. The Meeting noted the progress of studies on transboundary cooperation among protected wetlands in the Tumen Estuary, the plan of holding an expert group meeting in early 2020 and the indication of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) for its technical support in this process for the work.
7. **Marine Protected Areas:** The Meeting noted the interest of member States in expanding the target marine protected areas (MPAs) of the North-East Asia Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN), and in carrying out more activities on capacity building and knowledge/experience sharing. The Meeting commended the progress in the study on the sustainable management of MPAs, which will be utilized as a reference for cooperation among the NEAMPAN sites, and welcomed offer by China to host a NEAMPAN workshop.
8. **Low Carbon Cities:** The Meeting highlighted the significance of involving diverse stakeholders including cities in climate action and noted the relevance and value of the North-East Asian Low Carbon City Platform (NEA-LCCP)'s study and peer review. The Meeting supported the proposal from Mongolia and the Russian Federation to expand the current work and include Chinggis and Tsetserleg, Mongolia and Ulan-Ude and Irkutsk, Russian Federation, into the future work as well as a proposal by Ulan-Ude to host a LCCP seminar in 2020.
9. **Desertification and Land Degradation (DLD):** The Meeting noted the urgent need for resolving the duplication of the NEASPEC work with Northeast Asia Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought Network (DLDD-NEAN) due to the complete overlap of the national focal points, notably, in China, Mongolia and the Republic of Korea (ROK). Thus, the Meeting requested the Secretariat to undertake a study or hold an expert meeting and develop a proposal on new areas of work on interlinkage of DLD with other sectors including climate change for the consideration of the next SOM without duplication of efforts with the DLDD-NEAN. The Meeting also noted the proposal of Mongolia for hosting the expert meeting in Ulaanbaatar in 2020.
10. **Core Fund:** The Meeting appreciated the financial contributions of member States to the Core Fund as well as the Project-based Fund and noted the contributions of US\$ 50,000 from China,

¹ See Annex I. Rules of Procedures for the Science and Policy Committee of the North-East Asia Clean Air Partnership

and US\$ 200,000 from the ROK to the Core Fund in 2019. The Meeting also appreciated the Russian Federation for the new contribution of US\$324,000 to support three projects on tigers and leopards, and Mongolia for the indication of financial contribution to the project on snow leopard. While noting the financial statement submitted by the Secretariat, the SOM did not approve the proposed redeployment and requested the Secretariat to provide detailed information in the future if such redeployment is required. The Member States also suggested that Secretariat prepare and submit a detailed budget for the following year along with financial statement for the completed budget cycle.

11. **NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2021-2025:** The Meeting approved the proposed plan of developing the Strategic Plan 2021-2025 and requested the Secretariat to carry out the external evaluation in parallel with the preparation of the Strategic Plan, in accordance with the UN's norms and standards for evaluation and in full consultation with member States. In this regard, the Meeting recommended the Secretariat revising the initial scope of evaluation which would focus on the implementation of the current strategic plan, completed and ongoing projects and the institutional arrangement. The Meeting also noted the views of member States on linking the next strategic plan with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Meeting was informed about the establishment of the BRI International Green Development Coalition and noted the suggestion of China on specific cooperation areas and the need to forge synergies between NEASPEC and other regional and international cooperation mechanisms.

12. **Plan for the Next SOM:** The Meeting welcomed the proposal by the Russian Federation to host SOM-24, tentatively, in September 2020, Vladivostok and noted that the venue and time will be communicated to Member States by the Secretariat in due course.

13. The Meeting expressed its appreciation to the host government for its excellent arrangements and for its warm hospitality extended to all participants. The Chair expressed his appreciation to the Secretariat for its preparatory work for the SOM-23 and thanked delegations for their active and dedicated participation at the Meeting.

II. PROCEEDINGS OF THE TWENTY-THIRD SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING

A. Attendance

14. The Meeting was attended by delegations from China, Japan, Mongolia, Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation, together with experts and representatives of UN agencies and international organizations.

B. Opening session

15. The Senior Officials Meeting was opened by Mr. Ganbold Baasanjav, Head of the UNESCAP East and North-East Asia Office. He welcomed delegates and expressed gratitude to the Government of Mongolia for the excellent meeting arrangements and hospitality in hosting the meeting. Highlighting the concrete results delivered by NEASEPC in various areas of common challenges in the subregion, he commended the commitments of member States in promoting

multilateral environmental cooperation and sustainable development in a broader regional context, such as by aspiring all ESCAP member States to adopt the “Resolution on Strengthening Regional Cooperation to Tackle Air Pollution Challenges in Asia and the Pacific” at its 75th Commission Session. He stressed strengthening science-and-policy interface, country ownership and multistakeholder engagement in the process of devising the NEASPEC Strategic Plan for 2021-2025, and suggested reflecting the strategic role of NEASPEC in delivering the environment-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the subregion.

16. The welcoming remarks from the host Government was delivered by H.E. Mr. Tserenbat Namsrai, Minister of Environment and Tourism of Mongolia. He stressed that multilateral environmental cooperation has played an instrumental role in addressing environmental challenges in Mongolia, such as current improvement of air quality and climate change adaptation at both rural and urban areas. Noting the recent assessment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on climate change and land, he called on member States to “do more together and systemically” to deliver concrete and progressive performance towards: building a post-2020 global biodiversity framework under the Convention on Biological Diversity; achieving net zero emissions by 2050 in line with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change; and achieving land degradation neutrality under the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.

17. Mr. Tapan Mishra, UN Resident Coordinator in Mongolia, recalled the UN Climate Action Summit convened by the UN Secretary-General António Guterres to encourage increased ambition on climate change action, and urged officials to focus on aspects that make climate action a reality and fast. Noting that the Government of Mongolia has already banned the use of raw coal in households and introduced more efficient coal bricks, he suggested further steps to be taken and delivered through further collaboration among the member States. He also introduced that as part of the celebration of the UN Day his team planted 500 trees in deforested areas in Ulaanbaatar as an example on combating desertification.

C. Election of officers

18. The Meeting elected the following officers:

Chair:	Mr. Chinuukhei Bat-Erdene (Mongolia)
Vice-Chair:	Ms. Fengying Gao (China)
Rapporteur:	Mr. Oleg Kobiakov (the Russian Federation)

D. Adoption of the agenda

1. Opening of the meeting
 - a) Opening remarks by the Head of ESCAP East and North-East Asia Office
 - b) Welcoming remarks by the Head of Delegation of the Host Government
2. Election of officers
3. Adoption of the agenda

4. Statements by delegations of member States, UN and international organizations on issues related to sustainable development in North-East Asia
5. Review of programme planning and implementation
 - a) Transboundary Air Pollution
 - b) Nature Conservation in Transboundary Areas
 - c) Marine Protected Areas
 - d) Low Carbon Cities
 - e) Desertification and Land Degradation
6. Consideration of new NEASPEC programmes and activities
7. Review of the Core Fund
8. Plan for the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2021-2025
9. Venue, date and provisional agenda of the twenty-fourth SOM
10. Other issues
11. Adoption of the conclusion and recommendations of the Meeting

E. Policy issues for sustainable development in North-East Asia

(Agenda item 4)

19. The representative of China commended the pragmatic cooperation among member States and positive contributions of NEASPEC to environmental protection and sustainable development in North-East Asia. Noting the impact of rising unilateralism, protectionism and bullyism, she said the subregion continues facing unbalanced, uncoordinated and unsustainable development and greater environmental challenges. She introduced the achievements of pursuing ecological civilization and green sustainable development in China, and underscored the need to: uphold multilateralism and foster a fair and reasonable multilateral system of international environmental governance that helps to promote win-win results and enhance response capacity of all countries; strengthen strategic alignment and jointly promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, such as through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a major international economic cooperation initiative; and expand cooperation projects to produce more tangible results and increase contribution to the Core Fund under NEASPEC.

20. The representative of Japan introduced the vision of achieving simultaneous solution to economic and social issues through environmental policy for “new growth” that will bring high-quality of living and good environment to the next generation. He informed the Meeting of the establishment of a “SDGs Promoting Headquarters” headed by the Prime Minister and the development of “SDGs Implementation Guideline” and related action plan in 2016 as the mechanism of implementing the 2030 Agenda. He highlighted three priority areas in Japan’s SDG model, namely the “Promotion of Society 5.0 that corresponds to SDGs”, “Regional Revitalization driven by the SDGs” and “Empowerment of next generation and women”. He said during Japan’s

G20 Presidency the government decided to incorporate further measures targeting marine plastic litters, long-term national strategic under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and circular and ecological economy in an expanded SDGs Action Plan in 2019.

21. The representative of Mongolia shared the experience of developing the Mongolian National Sustainability Outlook with the support of UNESCAP and localizing SDGs in Ulaanbaatar city with focus on sustainable urban management and energy efficiency. Noting the gaps between current progress at national and regional level and the SDGs, she stressed the need of science-and-policy interface and coherence, mainstreaming natural and environmental sector into development strategies, accelerating adaptation to the impacts of climate change, and enhancing sustainable and green financing in partnership with the private sector and commercial banks in the implementation of national sustainable development strategies. She also called on a synergetic and systematic approach for enhanced subregional environmental cooperation among member States to tackle all aspects of sustainable development.

22. Introducing the “Korean SDGs” as a long-term and comprehensive national action plan to measure and deliver progress, the representative of the Republic of Korea highlighted the inclusive process when developing ambitious targets and over 200 indicators in the Korean approach towards implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He also introduced the establishment of the National Council on Climate Change and Air Quality to drive national-wide cross-sectoral policy measures, including international cooperation, to mitigate air pollution in the ROK. He urged NEASPEC member countries to reaffirm their national commitments for action against air pollution, and called on their support on designating 15th November as “International Day for Blue Sky” proposed by President Moon Jae-in during the UN Climate Action Summit, and on the plan of submitting a draft resolution at the UN General Assembly to be observed from 2020.

23. The representative of the Russian Federation echoed the achievements of NEASPEC on sharing national experience and best practice, and on expanding the current efforts on transboundary air pollution from the subregion to all ESCAP member States through the adoption of the ESCAP resolution. Noting the Russian contribution of project-based fund on marine projected areas and that the Russian government’s support to the subregional Multistakeholder Forum on SDGs, he suggested further publicizing the work of NEASPEC as part of the overall contribution of ESCAP in supporting countries in North-East Asia to achieve sustainable development.

F. Presentations and discussions on substantive agenda items

(Agenda items 5, 6, 7 and 8)

24. The Meeting heard presentations from the Secretariat on agenda item 5: Review of programme planning and implementation; agenda item 6: Consideration of new NEASPEC programmes and activities; agenda item 7: Review of the Core Fund; and agenda item 8: Plan for the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2021-2025, followed by interventions from member States, international organizations and experts. Key outcomes of discussions on these agenda items are included in the Conclusions and Recommendations in Section I of the Report of the Meeting.

Agenda item 5 (a) Transboundary Air Pollution

25. The Meeting noted the development of NEACAP launched at the last SOM, and the successful convening of the First Meeting of NEACAP SPC and Technical Centers in July 2019 to discuss key work areas including: emission inventory, scientific assessment report, integrated assessment modelling and policy dialogue. The meeting also reviewed the draft Rules of Procedure to operationalize the institutional arrangements of NEACAP and the suggested workplan for 2019-2020.

26. The representative of the ROK expressed its endorsement of the conclusions in the report of the first SPC meeting and proposed to establish two working groups under the SPC for the works on emission inventory and IAM respectively at the SOM-23. The representative of Mongolia supported the issues for consideration and suggested including fine dust into the Emission Inventory. The delegate from China suggested inclusion of capacity building as a programme area, cautioned against duplication of similar research work carried out under other mechanisms, and sought for clarification on the discussion at SPC-1 as well as the respective roles and responsibilities of the SPC, the suggested Working Groups and the Technical Centers. The representative of Japan said due to limited resources the work suggested to be carried out by the Working Groups should avoid duplication with existing mechanisms such as the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET), as its scope of work might be expanded to cover air pollution. The representative of the Russian Federation, with the ROK, emphasized that the concern on duplication has been well considered and reflected in the process of designing the architecture of NEACAP over the past years.

27. Member States discussed further on the draft Rules of Procedure of the NEACAP under this agenda item. Upon Secretariat's further clarification on the process of developing the draft Rules of Procedure based on the request of SPC-1, the representative of Mongolia, with the ROK and the Russian Federation, suggested adopting the draft Rules of Procedure for NEACAP SPC and Working Groups, respectively, to allow the SPC to develop substantive workplans for the consideration of SOM. The representative of China underlined that the SPC should report its discussion and recommendation to SOM for final decision, and that SOM did not take any decision to establish the suggested Working Groups under NEACAP. She also stressed that SOM should make decisions first on the priority areas of SPC, then on the establishment of working groups followed by discussions on the rules of procedure of relevant working groups.

Agenda item 5 (b) Nature Conservation in Transboundary Areas

28. The Meeting noted the progress achieved by NEASPEC in nature conservation and reviewed three proposals from the Russian Federation on joint habitat management for big feline species and a proposed initiative on transboundary conservation in Tumen River Estuary for migratory birds and their habitats, respectively.

29. Saying no single country can succeed in stabilizing the population of feline species without building up transboundary collaboration, the representative of the Russian Federation said his delegation was convinced and ready to fund the proposed three new projects based on the initial project on transboundary conservation for Amur Tiger and Leopard, and that both the range and

non-range countries are welcome to join in.

30. The representative of Mongolia introduced the Wildlife Week held in her country recently and the priority areas identified for enhancing transboundary and regional cooperation over the next six years. She requested member States to agree on the new project proposals including a project on snow leopard, and said the Mongolian government is ready to contribute on the conservation of snow leopard by seeking alternative funding. The representative of the ROK expressed appreciation to the Russian Federation for the financial contribution and the interest in participating in the proposed projects. A representative of the ROK suggested establishing a knowledge sharing platform among the member States, and collectively funding the gaps for scientific research in the further process of developing new collaborative project.

31. The representative of China introduced the outcome of the International Forum on Tiger and Leopard Transboundary Conservation held in July in China and highlighted the need to collaborate further on monitoring technologies, habitat protection and establishing transboundary mechanism and corridors. Regarding the proposed new activities, he said the concepts have been discussed preliminarily with the Northeast Tiger and Leopard National Park Administration of China and are subject to official approval. Saying the process is like “digging a tunnel from both ends and meet in between”, the representative of the Russian Federation shared further information on the high-level agreement and pledges between the two countries and that his government is ready to disburse the project funding once the approval processes with relevant countries complete.

32. The representative of the Hann Seidel Foundation suggested engaging with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) as a range country of Amur Tiger and Leopard into possible joint scientific research, and that the Foundation can facilitate and finance the participation of DPRK in the new projects.

33. The representative of EAAFP expressed support on the proposed initiative on transboundary conservation in the Tumen River for migratory birds and habitats and suggested contributing technical expertise and support via EAAFP’s expert task group.

Agenda item 5 (c) Marine Protected Areas

34. The Meeting noted the recent progress under NEAMPAN and reviewed the initial findings of the study project on “Strengthening the Subregional Cooperation through Knowledge Sharing on Sustainable Management of Marine Protected Areas” funded by the Russian Federation. The Meeting also noted the theme of ESCAP 76th Commission Session as “Promoting Economic, Social and Environmental Cooperation on Oceans for Sustainable Development” to be held in May 2020.

35. The representative of Japan commended on the NEANPAN project and suggested strengthening information sharing under NEANPAN to help member countries address the challenge on MPA monitoring. The representative of the Russian Federation confirmed to support further cooperation and implementation of the project. The delegate from China supported more MPAs to join NEAMPAN sites, and suggested organizing more capacity building and experience sharing, including targeted efforts on conducting joint research among member countries on the protection of migratory marine species. On the plan of organizing a NEAMPAN workshop, he said the National Forestry and Grassland Administration of China will further communicate with the

Secretariat on the specifics to host the meeting.

Agenda item 5 (d) Low Carbon Cities

36. The Meeting noted the progress on the peer review for Guangzhou city, China, the comparative studies on low carbon city development among China, Japan and the ROK, and the plan of organizing the next peer review for Gwangju metropolitan city, the ROK.

37. The representative of the Russian Federation commended on the results of the current studies and expressed interest in engaging in the NEASPEC work on low carbon cities. Considering the air pollution challenge faced by the eastern regions of the country, he proposed inclusion of Ulan-Ude and Irkutsk cities located in the Baikal natural territory in the NEA-LCCP. The representative of Mongolia also expressed interest in including Chinggis and Tsetserleg cities in future work of the NEA-LCCP, noting that the national government has pledged to develop the area as historical tourism hotspot and prioritize the development of renewable energy and energy efficiency.

38. The representative of Japan applauded the project approach of engaging non-state actors and seeking for co-benefits in climate change mitigation and urban development. The representative of the ROK said the NEA-LCCP is very valid and relevant to the current national efforts and fully supported to carry on the peer-review in Gwangju city to draw useful lessons from others. He suggested listing candidate cities based on the nomination of member countries and introducing relevant concept of smart cities in the design of future peer-reviews. The representative of China introduced the outcome of the national low carbon cities pilot programme, and expressed support for the efforts and progress made under the NEA-LCCP.

39. On the suggested synergies between NEA-LCCP and joint research project on low carbon cities carried out under the Tripartite Environmental Cooperation among China, Japan and the ROK (TEMM), the representative of Japan supported sharing the result of the NEA-LCCP peer-review at a workshop back-to-back with TEMM project meeting in Gwangju city, while noting that there is no specific plan on future cooperation due to limited financial resources. The representative of the Russian Federation proposed, and the meeting supported, to host a NEA-LCCP seminar in 2020 in Ulan-Ude city.

40. The representative of the Korea Environment Institute (KEI) expressed support in the future work of NEA-LCCP through in-kind contribution, such as by organizing expert group meetings with KEI's internal budget.

Agenda item 5 (e) Desertification and Land Degradation

41. The Meeting reviewed the development of various DLD activities under NEASPEC since early 2000, including recent findings on subregional multistakeholder analysis, workshop on new and innovative approaches to DLD, and informal consultations with member governments on the future direction of NEASPEC's work on DLD. Noting the intensified challenges on land and the existence of and duplication between parallel mechanisms in the subregion, the meeting considered options for DLD-related work under NEASPEC.

42. Noting that the UN General Assembly declared 2021-2030 the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the representative of Mongolia urged for synergetic and systemic planning in future subregional activities on DLD. The representative of the ROK appreciated the recognition of the “Peace Forest Initiative (PFI)” launched by the ROK in 2019 to address the DLD challenge whilst contributing to multiple SDGs, and, with Mongolia, favoured the option of integrating NEASPEC’s work on DLD with interlinked issues or projects to focus on the co-benefits between DLD and other sectors. He proposed the Secretariat conducting initial research or holding a workshop to develop potential concepts or proposals to be considered at SOM-24. Another delegate from the ROK suggested the work of NEASPEC on DLD focusing on engagement with civil society organizations and stressed the need to avoid duplication with activities carried out by the DLDD-NEAN.

43. The representative of Japan questioned the PFI as unilateral initiative developed by the ROK and noted that the peacekeeping goal of the initiative falls beyond the mandate of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) where the initiative was highlighted recently. The representative of China suggested developing small demonstration or pilot projects in sandstorm source countries, building on China’s previous UNCCD presidency and experiences of combating DLD.

44. The representative of Mongolia proposed, and the Meeting supported, hosting an Expert Group Meeting in Ulaanbaatar in 2020 to seek clarification and develop solid ideas on the inter-linked issues between DLD and other sectors.

Agenda item 6. Consideration of new NEASPEC programmes and activities

45. SOM did not receive proposals on new programmes and activities while new project proposals within the current programmatic areas were discussed under the respective agenda item.

Agenda item 7. Review of the Core Fund

46. The Meeting considered the Secretariat’s report on NEASPEC Core Fund and project-based fund. The representative of the Russian Federation cautioned the merely 51 per cent delivery rate of the Core Fund and suggested fleshing out the budget plan to match it with planned activities so to ensure timely expenditure within the proposed timeframe. The representative of the ROK said the government is considering further increase of its contribution to the Core Fund for the year of 2020. The representative of China expressed continued support and annual contribution of USD 50,000 to the Core Fund and suggested the Secretariat seeking for more support from various mechanisms.

47. The representative of Mongolia pledged the in-kind contributions for hosting an Expert Group Meeting on DLD and the Second Meeting of NEACAP SPC in 2020, and direct financial contribution to the snow leopard project proposed under Nature Conservation of NEASPEC. The representative of Japan expressed constraints on financial contributions to the Core Fund in the current political situation and reaffirmed the in-kind contributions through the sharing of know-how and best practices.

48. On the proposed redeployment, respectively, for organizing a meeting of national focal points for the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2021-2025 and for supporting new activities under NEACAP,

the representative of the Russian Federation, with China, suggested the Secretariat substantiating the information on where redeployment is required and specifying changes anticipated at the project level with clear budget implication. The delegate of the Russian Federation also suggested that the Secretariat reconsider its current budgetary practice and provide the financial statement together with the annual budget plan from the next budget cycle. The Meeting took note of the concern expressed by member States without approving the redeployment of budget.

Agenda item 8. Plan for the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2021-2025

49. The Meeting considered a revised plan for evaluating the current NEASPEC Strategic Plan and the steps suggested for devising a new Plan for 2021-2025. The representative of the Russian Federation emphasized that an independent external evaluation is a compulsory procedure according to the UN practice, which should not be substituted by evaluation carried out by stakeholders and member States. He suggested proceeding with the preparation for the new NEASPEC Strategic Plan with the support of an external consultant following the UN norms. Noting the need for continued discussion on the formulation of a new NEASPEC Strategic Plan, the representative of Japan supported the revised plan of evaluation.

50. The representative of China commended on the implementation of the current NEASPEC Strategic Plan and suggested strengthening the link between NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2021-2025 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to promote multilateral cooperation and support the subregion achieving environment-related SDGs. She emphasized that the formulation of the Strategic Plan should be a member-states-led process, informed by the features and ideas of the Belt and Road cooperation as well as the establishment of the BRI International Green Development Coalition, and suggested strategic alignment between NEASPEC and other mechanisms, such as the Belt and Road Initiative. She also suggested that member States should deepen cooperation and utilize the unique advantage of NEASPEC to promote global environmental cooperation so as to become a most active multilateral mechanism in North-East Asia.

51. Noting that the ESCAP subregional offices will be enrolled in ESCAP's external evaluation process in 2020, the representative of the ROK supported proceeding with the initial plan of external evaluation with a revised scope not overlapping with the ESCAP evaluation.

G. Venue, date and provisional agenda of the Twenty-Fourth Senior Officials Meeting

(Agenda item 9)

52. The Meeting discussed the venue, date and agenda of the Twenty-Fourth Session of the Senior Officials Meeting of NEASPEC. The Meeting expressed its appreciation to the Government of the Russian Federation for generously offering to host the next Meeting tentatively planned in September 2020 in Vladivostok. The proposed dates, venue and the provisional agenda will be announced by the Secretariat in consultation with the host Government in due course.

H. Other Issues

(Agenda item 10)

53. The Meeting expressed deep appreciation to the Government of Mongolia for generously hosting the Twenty-Third Session of the Senior Officials Meeting with warm hospitality and excellent arrangements, and to the Secretariat for the excellent preparation of the Meeting.

I. Adoption of the Report

(Agenda item 11)

54. The Meeting adopted the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Senior Officials Meeting on 10 October 2019. The report of the Meeting was finalized and adopted by circulating it among the member States after the Senior Officials Meeting.

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Annex:

Rules of Procedure for the Science and Policy Committee of the North-East Asia Clean Air Partnership

1. Background and Mandate

- 1.1 Pursuant to the Terms of Reference of the North-East Asia Clean Air Partnership (NEACAP), the Science and Policy Committee (SPC or the Committee), as the steering body, is responsible to plan, monitor and review NEACAP activities, and promote science-policy linkages through guiding technical assessments and dialogues.
- 1.2 The Terms of Reference also suggests that the Committee recommend activity direction and organizational structure of NEACAP to the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC).

2. Membership of the Committee

Nomination of members

- 2.1 Each member State of NEASPEC nominates two experts for the Committee, who possess (a) solid expertise in the core areas of programme of NEACAP, particularly, science-policy linkages, (b) experience in international cooperation on air pollution, and (c) fluent in English, as members to the Committee.
- 2.2 Any replacement of the Committee member shall be made and notified to the secretariat by the member State concerned in writing of the names, contact details and the effective date of any replacement. The replacement will possess the required qualifications of a member.

Alternative members

- 2.3 In the event that a Committee member is unable to participate in a meeting of the Committee, the member concerned may designate after due consultation with his or her government, an expert/official possessing the required qualifications to represent the member. Approval for the attendance of an alternative member shall be sought through a written notification well in advance of the meeting to the secretariat. The alternative member will exercise the same rights and duties as the member of the Committee.

3. Roles and Responsibilities of the Committee

- 3.1 To fulfill the mandate, the Committee will operate on the basis of consensus to:
 - a. Guide the development of the overall frameworks, workplans, and technical assessments and ensure their consistency and integrity;
 - b. Review progress in operationalizing the NEACAP activities , and provide guidance when necessary;
 - c. Provide direction and strategic guidance to the Working Groups and Technical Centers regarding the development and implementation of the NEACAP activities and other relevant activities;
 - d. Assist the secretariat in ensuring coordination among different work streams, national, subregional and regional activities;
 - e. Recommend to SOM, any policy or strategic matters with, as appropriate, activity direction and organizational structure considered necessary for effectively delivering the mandate of NEACAP;

- f. Advise the secretariat regarding the mobilization of financial and in-kind contributions to implement NEACAP activities;
- g. Report the progress and outcome of NEACAP activities to the SOM through the secretariat for SOM's consideration and decision if necessary; and
- h. Hold annual and, as agreed by the members of the SPC, ad hoc meeting to perform the above-mentioned work.

4. Meetings of the Committee

Regular meeting

- 4.1 Members of the Committee may meet on annual basis. The meeting of the Committee will take place at the seat of the secretariat, unless other appropriate arrangements are made by the secretariat in consultation with the Committee.
- 4.2 The Committee meeting may be joined by chairs of Working Groups and representatives of Technical Centers.
- 4.3 The secretariat will notify all members of the Committee of the dates and venue of a meeting at least three months before the session is held.

Ad hoc meeting

- 4.4 Ad hoc meetings may be convened by the secretariat and/or Chair of the Committee, when the members make a request for such a meeting to the secretariat, or at the request of the secretariat when circumstances demand.
- 4.5 The meeting can be held via internet/ teleconference is so agreed by members.

Agenda and meeting document

- 4.6 The secretariat will prepare and notify a provisional meeting agenda to the members at least two months in advance. The provisional agenda will include all items proposed by members of the Committee and by the secretariat.
- 4.7 Meeting documentation will be transmitted to the Committee at least four weeks prior to the meeting.
- 4.8 The Secretariat may use electronic means for transmission, distribution and storage of documentation, without prejudice to other means of circulation of documentation.

5. Conduct of business

- 5.1 The Committee shall make every effort to reach a decision by consensus regarding any matter relating to the operation of NEACAP.

6. Officers

- 6.1 At the commencement of each meeting, the Committee will elect a chair and vice-chair. The chair and vice-chair will hold office until the next regular meeting and be eligible for re-election.
- 6.2 If the Chair is unable to serve for the term until the next regular meeting, the Vice-Chair will act as Chair for the remainder of that term.

7. Report of the meeting

7.1 The secretariat will prepare a draft report and present the draft to the members of the Committee for the review and adoption based on consensus. The secretariat will circulate the report to the member States in a timely manner.

8. Amendment and Other provisions

8.1 The Committee may recommend any amendments of the Rules of Procedure to SOM, provided that the amendment is consistent with the Terms of Reference of the NEACAP. The SOM may revise the Rule of Procedure if deems necessary.

8.2 In the event of any matter arising, which is not covered by the rules of procedure, the common practices of SOM shall apply.