

**Expert Consultation Meeting on NEASPEC activities in the field of
Transboundary Air Pollution in North-East Asia**

20-21 January 2011, Incheon, Republic of Korea

CONCEPT PAPER

I. Background

This Consultation Meeting will be convened primarily to discuss the project proposal on “The Establishment of a Regional System for Adverse Environmental Impact Assessment of Air Pollution” submitted by the Russian Federation. The initial proposal relating to transboundary air pollution in North-East Asia was presented by the Russian Federation at the fifteenth Senior Officials Meeting of NEASPEC (SOM-15, 17-18 March, 2010 Tokyo, Japan). Based on the discussions that took place during that meeting, the Russian Federation submitted a new proposal in May 2010. Subsequently, the NEASPEC secretariat facilitated consultations among the member States on this proposal in May-June 2010 and collected views and comments from member States. During this consultation process, member States generally provided positive feedback on the proposal and submitted some specific requests to further refine the proposal prior to SOM-16. Upon further consultations of the NEASPEC secretariat with the Russian counterparts, the Russian government provided in November 2010 some additional clarifications on the proposal which are replicated in part II below. *Thus, it is expected that the Consultation Meeting will discuss in detail the proposal submitted by the Russian Federation in order to provide SOM-16 with final recommendations for further action.*

II. Concept paper on the proposal of the Russian Federation within NEASPEC on “Establishment of a regional system for adverse environmental impact assessment of air pollution”

The following was communicated to the secretariat by the Russian Federation:

“The overall aim of proposal is to promote cooperation between North-East Asian countries under NEASPEC through the process of establishment of a joint scientific and research background for ambient air protection in the region. It is considered beneficial for all involved countries as extensive expertise in the field already exists on the national level thus getting separately developed and evolving approaches together would facilitate a complex and comprehensive approach to the air quality management in the region.

Acknowledging that an international legal and technical framework addressing

national and regional issues related to air quality management and pollution abatement strategies such as the UNECE Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP) is already established and has proven itself effective for a number of countries in Western, Central and Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation has proposed to undertake a feasibility study regarding the application of scientific, methodological and regulatory approaches developed under the Convention to tackle regional problems related to the adverse environmental impact of air pollution in the NEASPEC region.

The focus region is diverse in terms of its territories development: highly urbanized areas neighbor natural reserves and not populated and pristine lands, highly industrialized sites can be located in-between. Therefore, an approach to the comprehensive regional system of air pollution impact assessment based on approaches of the LRTAP Convention should be two-fold, i.e. considering both factors of ecological balance and ecosystem fragility, and effects of air pollution on human health and overall quality of life.

The following steps are proposed to be reviewed and considered by member countries within the feasibility study on the proposal of the Russian Federation:

1. Review of major air pollutant (SO_x, NO_x, PM, CO, VOCs and heavy metals) sources in the region (in terms of PM – both natural, e.g. deserts, and anthropogenic sources) and the overall scale of the emissions. This information will help in identifying regional hotspots and prioritize areas for further investigation and analysis in accordance with individual and common interests of partner countries.
2. Pilot study on selected area (areas) of partner countries (focal areas to be proposed by countries) that is to include:
 - a. analysis of existing and collection of new air pollution monitoring data on various pollutants (selected and agreed upon by partner countries) and on regional meteorology;
 - b. application of regionally available pollution dispersion models on collected data for pollution transfer and deposition analysis encompassing territories of all partner countries;
 - c. modeling-based assessment of air pollution impacts on human health on national and transboundary scales (application of nationally developed models and considerations on elaboration of a common regional model/GAINS Asia development);
 - d. assessment of the critical loads/levels methodology adopted within the LRTAP Convention in a view of its prospective applicability for ecosystems degradation/regeneration monitoring;
3. Consultations with LRTAP Convention Secretariat and Task Forces, e.g. on Hemispheric Transport of Air Pollution, on Integrated Assessment Modelling,

Coordination Center for Effects, EANET and other regional programmes and expert networks to share opinions and ideas on the scale of possible integration of regionally available knowledge and techniques with approved mechanisms of the LRTAP Convention”.

III. Organization of the meeting

The meeting will be held on 20-21 January 2011 in Incheon, Republic of Korea at the premises of ESCAP the Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia, located at the following address:

ESCAP Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia
17th Fl. Meet-you-all Tower, 7-50 Songdo-dong, Yeonsu-gu
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Objectives of the Consultation Meeting

- Review existing scientific approaches to regional and subregional initiatives for modeling transboundary air pollution;
- Review existing methodologies for the assessment of environmental impacts of air pollution in North-East Asia and Europe and reflect on possibilities of exchange of experience between the regions;
- Discuss the scientific and technical approaches outlined in the proposal submitted by the Russian Federation with view of submitting recommendations to SOM-16;
- Identify expected goals and objectives and draw up a preliminary work plan on implementation of the proposal.

Organizers

- UNESCAP (NEASPEC secretariat)

Expected Participants

- Experts from national research institutes and academia in NEASPEC member countries, international organizations and UN agencies