



International Workshop on Desertification and Land Degradation

7-8 July 2015, Beijing, China

REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP

1. NEASPEC and the State Forestry Administration (SFA) of China jointly organized the International Workshop on Desertification and Land Degradation on 7-8 July 2015 in Beijing, China, to bring together stakeholders across sectors to review subregional and national progress as well as challenges on desertification and land degradation (DLD), and to discuss the development of the North-East Asian Multi-stakeholder Plan (NEAMSP).
2. The Workshop gathered participants from governments, academia, civil society organizations and the private sector from China, Japan, Mongolia and Republic of Korea, as well as subregional networks and international organizations working in the subregion. Participants shared information on national progress and various activities they carried out including joint activities with other organizations.
3. **[An overview of status and activities in the subregion]** China has been implementing DLD control programmes since the 1950s. Both institutional and research capacity has been long-established in this area, with the China National Coordinating Group to Combat Desertification to coordinate inter-ministerial cooperation and over a hundred universities offering courses related to desertification. Key national projects implemented include the Three-North Shelterbelt Programme and Beijing-Tianjin Desertification Control Programme, both of which contribute to China's national goal to bring rehabilitable desertification-affected land under control by 2050.
4. Mongolia began its DLD activities in the 1980s. With support of the international community, has been implementing large scale projects such as the Green Belt Project and adopting new laws as well as monitoring systems. National monitoring has carried out since 1990 and has been continuously aligning with international monitoring methods. Currently, 77% of Mongolia's territory is affected by DLD, mainly caused by wind erosion, increase in livestock and overgrazing. The need to transfer knowledge and technology at community level to prevent and control erosion has been emphasized.
5. Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK), also affected by dust and sandstorms originating from China and Mongolia, have been supporting bilateral and multilateral DLD activities in the subregion. These include Japan's project on Sustainable Use of

Grasslands by Participatory Approach in Mongolia and ROK's Green Belt Plantation Project in Mongolia and Plantation Project in Kubuqi Desert in China.

6. A number of subregional mechanisms have been established by governments and international agencies to cooperate on controlling DLD and dust and sandstorms (DSS). The Northeast Asia Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought Network (DLDD-NEAN) was established in 2011 by China, Mongolia, ROK and UNCCD to enhance cooperation and implementation of the Northeast Asia Subregional Action Programme to Combat Desertification and Dust and Sandstorms (NEA SRAP). North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC), established in 1993 by six Northeast Asian countries, has implemented plantation, training and GIS database projects to support the Regional Master Plan for the Prevention and Control of Dust and Sandstorms (DSS) in North-East Asia, which was developed by ADB, UNEP, UNCCD and UNESCAP. The Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting (TEMM) among China, Japan and ROK has initiated joint research on DSS since 2008 with two working groups to develop a DSS forecasting model and to research success factors of ecosystem restoration in preventing DSS.
7. International organizations such as the UNCCD have been promoting further international commitment including Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), which is closely linked to sustainable development, to strive for the state when productive land remains stable or increases. Information has also been generated and disseminated through various activities by international agencies and centers such as UNEP's Global Environment Outlook and Review of the Kubuqi Ecological Restoration Project, A Desert Green Economy Pilot Initiative; and World Agroforestry Centre's training workshops and projects on participatory agroforestry development in DPRK, which help build local capacity and integrate local socio-economic considerations into sloping land management.
8. Civil society organizations (CSOs) have showcased a range of activities including greening projects, some involving a large number of volunteers, such as Billion Tree in Desert and Green Corps by Future Forest, Chagannor Project by Ecopeace Asia in dried salt lakes, and Alxa Tengger Desert Fixation Programme by China Green Foundation (CGF). The CGF has also increasingly fundraised from small-scale donations through utilizing mobile applications, which is considered more stable and sustainable. Green Asia Network's projects in Mongolia also address local sustainability in terms of economic self-sufficiency on job creation and cultivation, and empowerment of locals through training and organizing cooperative association. A sustainable and integrated approach has also been adopted by the private sector with Elion Group's example that business operations can integrate with ecological restoration and improve local livelihoods while contributing to innovation and technological advancement in DLD control as well as deserticulture.

North-East Asia Multi-stakeholder Plan (NEAMSP)

9. The overview of subregional status and activities shows that the subregion has a group of active stakeholders from both source and affected countries across various sectors, each carrying out different activities. There are a number of international joint activities among governments and subregional networks and mechanisms are mostly intergovernmental. Thus there is much room to enhance communication among stakeholders from multiple sectors as there is currently no established platform or tools to include CSOs, academia and the private sector. Sharing information on each other's activities and plans as well as creating a platform to gather wider stakeholders will facilitate cooperation and resource pooling. It will also allow identification of new partners and opportunities by providing a useful overview of activities and actors in the subregion.
10. As demonstrated from the works of participants and the proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), DLD is closely linked with socio-economic development. Successful and sustained DLD control has to integrate and empower local communities. This multifaceted approach will require more resources, collaboration and peer support. Therefore active information sharing and communication will be needed to strengthen coordination and access to resources.
11. In light of the existing subregional mechanisms, on-going works undertaken by various stakeholders and the need to enhance information sharing and communication among stakeholders, the Workshop supported the proposal to develop a multi-stakeholder plan (MSP) to share information. The MSP will also act as a focal point for regular discussions to take place.
12. **[Linkages with other mechanisms]** The Workshop recognized the added value of the MSP in information sharing and recommended linkages to be made with current multilateral initiatives including the UNCCD and DLDD-NEAN, such as having discussions during the upcoming DLDD-NEAN annual meeting in November 2015. It was suggested that the MSP can support countries with their national reporting to UNCCD.
13. **[Modality and approval]** As the MSP aims to be open and inclusive, it will adopt a simple modality of stakeholder participation with support from the NEASPEC Secretariat rather than creating an exclusive body of members for operation. NEASPEC Secretariat will report the outcomes of this Workshop and seek approval from its member States on implementation of the NEAMSP at the 20th Senior Officials Meeting. The Workshop also recommended participating agencies to seek formal approval in becoming part of the NEAMSP once NEASPEC confirms its implementation.
14. **[Scope and activities]** Considering the limited availability of resources and capacity provided by the NEASPEC Secretariat at the moment, the MSP could focus on sharing information of project activities and policies. Should more resources and technical

capacity be made available, the MSP can expand to the mapping of technology and scientific research, and can synthesis knowledge and analytical output from information collected in the MSP. The Workshop also suggested holding regular forums or conferences to gather MSP participants for discussions and exchange, which can be theme-specific and linked with other major DLD events or a specific scientific theme.

15. **[Next steps]** Further to the views and suggestions received at the Workshop, NEASPEC Secretariat will seek further inputs from participants to revise Part I of the NEAMSP paper. Questionnaires will continue to be distributed to invite inputs from DLD stakeholders in the subregion including those who could not attend the Workshop. Information compiled from the questionnaires will be shared with participants, and participating agencies are encouraged to present about the MSP at other DLD-related occasions.