

UNITED NATIONS

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Twentieth Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of NEASPEC

1-2 February 2016

Tokyo, Japan

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

1. The Twentieth Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of NEASPEC was held in Tokyo on 1-2 February 2016. 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 Japan.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

2. The 20th Senior Officials Meeting (SOM-20) had the opportunity to review the recently adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its linkages with NEASPEC's programmes as well as the significant potential of NEASPEC in mobilizing subregional efforts for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The potential linkages have been reflected in the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2016-2020 adopted by the SOM-20. The Meeting also had a roundtable discussion on the SDGs and their implications on sustainable development in North-East Asia, and noted a number of suggestions and ideas including sharing best practices and experiences, drawing on national-level reviews, building (sub) regional perspectives, formulating innovative financing scheme for renewable energy, establishing subregional and national-based targets and indicators, facilitating multi-level regular and inclusive reviews, etc.

3. The SOM-20 commended the progress in implementing activities in five programme areas while noting the importance of building synergies with relevant subregional, regional and multilateral programmes.

4. **Transboundary Air Pollution:** The Meeting noted the progress in implementing the Project “Development of the Technical and Policy Frameworks for Transboundary Air Pollution Assessment and Abatement in North-East Asia”, in particular, the modeling of source-receptor relationship of air pollution with technical support from LTP experts and the importance of such modelling work for policy intervention. The SOM also noted the plan for formulating the concept for a new subregional framework during the first half of 2016, and recommended to take account of programmes of existing mechanisms, notably, LTP and EANET, in such a way that the new framework complements these mechanisms.
5. **Nature Conservation: [Conservation of Amur Tiger and Leopard]** The Meeting welcomed progress made in the NEASPEC project “Study on Transborder Movement of Amur Tigers and Leopards using Camera Trapping and Molecular Genetic Analysis” and supported the outcomes of the Project Review Meeting taken place in Harbin, September 2015. The Meeting noted that the Project would be concluded in late 2016 with the launching of the Project report. The Meeting also noted the request of ROK to obtain DNA samples and the intended follow-up of the Russian Federation on the request.
6. **Nature Conservation: [Conservation of Migratory Bird Habitats]** The Meeting reviewed the NEASPEC Project, “Conservation and Rehabilitation of Habitats for Key Migratory Birds in North-East Asia”, and appreciated efforts in the progress made. The Meeting noted the importance of studies carried out in this project, especially in transborder areas such as the DMZ and the area bordering China, Mongolia and the Russian Federation. The Meeting recommended that such studies to be continued in the future. The Meeting took note of the importance of this Project in generating knowledge and building capacity; and recommended cooperation with existing bilateral and multilateral mechanisms.
7. **Marine Protected Areas:** The Meeting noted the list of the target MPAs of NEAMPAN and the plan to hold the first workshop on sharing experiences in MPA management in June 2016 in Suncheon, ROK. The Meeting was also informed that this workshop will have members of Steering Committee, managers and stakeholders of the target MPAs and other relevant mechanisms. The Meeting also noted that the Steering Committee meeting to be held in conjunction with the Workshop will resolve pending issues including the composition of Advisory Committee members.
8. **Low Carbon Cities:** The Meeting recognized the significant potential of low carbon cities to achieving nationally determined contributions in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and a number of international collaboration projects on low carbon cities, notably, between Japan and South-East Asian countries. The Meeting noted the North-East Asia Low Carbon City Platform (NEA-LCCP) as an open platform for organizations working on low carbon cities to jointly mobilize their efforts. The Meeting also adopted the revised Terms of References. The Meeting recommended member States to inform the Secretariat of national institutions (more than one) as participating organizations.
9. **Desertification and Land Degradation (DLD):** The Meeting was briefed on the development of the North-East Asia Multi-Stakeholder Plan (NEAMSP) as well as the outcomes and recommendations from the International Workshop on Desertification and

Land Degradation held in Beijing, July 2015. The Meeting recognized the Plan as an important initiative and supported implementation of the Plan. The Meeting welcomed the change of programme area title into Desertification and Land Degradation. The Meeting recommended NEASPEC to collaborate with multilateral mechanisms such as through establishing communication with regional and global mechanisms; exploring approaches to obtain and utilize information e.g. existing reported data; and integrating access to resources, in particular, funding opportunities. The Meeting was informed that China will share its latest national desertification monitoring report and wishes to provide technical support to NEASPEC's activities.

10. **Consideration of NEASPEC Programmes and Activities:** The Meeting was informed that the Russian Federation will revise its proposal on marine protected area and will provide to the Secretariat for consultation with member States. The Meeting was notified on Mongolia's suggestion to carry out studies on the migration of gazelles. The Meeting noted that member States will receive further information on Mongolia's proposal for their consideration.

11. **Core Fund:** The Meeting noted the need for adequate and sustainable financial resources for NEASPEC to ensure NEASPEC's effectiveness in enhancing cooperation. China and ROK announced contributions of US\$50,000 and at least US\$120,000, respectively, to the Core Fund in 2016. The Meeting appreciated the financial contributions to the Core Fund and requested member States to strengthen core and project-based funds with further financial contribution, and noted the intended in-kind contributions of Japan through sharing its expertise and experiences. The Meeting also requested the Secretariat to provide full information on financial contributions since the establishment of NEASPEC. The Secretariat informed the Meeting that full information will be shared with the member States together with the Report of SOM-20, and for each SOM hereafter. The Meeting approved the proposed budget plan for 2016-2018 together with the outlined outputs and activities formulated in accordance with the Strategic Plan.

12. **NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2016-2020:** The Meeting adopted the draft Strategic Plan noting that projects/activities under each programme will be developed in due course. With regard to the national members of proposed Working Groups, the Meeting requested the Secretariat to provide a list of the current national counterparts including national focal points, project partners and experts to assist in member governments for member nomination. The Secretariat informed the Meeting that the list would be circulated together with the Report of SOM-20.

13. **Plan for the Next SOM:** The Meeting noted the request to regularize timing of future SOMs, possibly in the first quarter of the year. The Meeting welcomed the statement of the delegation of the Republic of Korea on hosting SOM-21 in the first quarter of 2017, and noted the venue and time will be communicated with the Secretariat in due course.

14. **Other Matters:** The Meeting noted the three upcoming meetings of NOWPAP that are relevant to the work of NEASPEC on MPA, i.e. CEARAC focal point meeting in Toyama on 7-8 April, PMORAC focal point meeting in Vladivostok on 18-20 May and DINRAC focal

point meeting in Beijing in May. The Meeting noted the request for member States to inform the Secretariat on bilateral and multilateral processes and programmes that are relevant to NEASPEC in order to take them into account for activity planning and implementation of NEASPEC.

15. 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-20 and also thanked delegations for their very active and dedicated participation at the Meeting.

II. PROCEEDINGS OF THE TWENTIETH SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING

A. Attendance

1. The Meeting was attended by delegations from China, Japan, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation, and representatives of the UN system agencies and international organizations¹.

B. Opening session

2. The Senior Officials Meeting was opened by Mr. Kilaparti Ramakrishna, the Director of the UNESCAP East and North-East Asia Office. He welcomed delegates and expressed gratitude to the Government of the Japan for the excellent meeting arrangements. He mentioned that 2016 marks a new step in global sustainable development as the world community commences the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this connection, he highlighted the unique nature of NEASPEC to contribute towards achieving the SDGs and that the adoption of the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2016-2020 will further develop NEASPEC's potential in this regard.

3. The welcoming remarks from the host Government were delivered by Mr. Masakazu Hamachi, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan. He first expressed his appreciation to member States for coming to Japan to discuss environmental issues. He noted the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals suggests that environmental issues are becoming more relevant globally. He emphasized that North-East Asian countries are expected to play an indispensable role in achieving sustainable development with guidance of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, through close cooperation and uniting efforts. He regarded the Strategic Plan of NEASPEC to be timely for discussion of a number of topics relevant to the SDG, and Japan will contribute by sharing its experiences as well as expertise.

¹ Please see Annex I – List of participants for details.

C. Election of officers

4. The Meeting elected the following officers:

Chair:	Mr. Nobuhiro Kino (Japan)
Vice-Chair:	Mr. Alexander Smirnov (Russian Federation)
Rapporteur:	Mr. Hyung-jong Lee (Republic of Korea)

D. Adoption of the agenda

1. Opening of the meeting
 - a) Opening remarks by the Director of ESCAP ENEA Office
 - b) Welcoming remarks by head of the host government delegation
2. Election of officers
3. Adoption of 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. Review of the Strategic Plan of NEASPEC
7. New NEASPEC programmes and activities
8. Review of the Core Fund
9. Venue, date and provisional agenda of the twenty- first SOM
10. Other issues
11. Adoption of the conclusions and recommendations of the Meeting

E. Policy issues for sustainable development in North-East Asia
(Agenda item 4)

5. The representative of China highlighted the contribution of NEASPEC to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and that implementation of the Agenda will also provide opportunity for new contributions to be made by NEASPEC. The representative suggested that: (1) NEASPEC should broaden the perspectives and seek new ways and areas of cooperation to better serve and further benefit the subregion; (2) NEASPEC should continue to implement projects and carry out research and feasibility study for new projects to enrich cooperation, and China is interested in a new programme area in water pollution prevention in river basins and coastal areas; (3) there is need to increase the Core Fund to serve as guarantee for cooperation. Developed countries should invest further into the Core fund and that further support should be sought from countries as well as international funds. China will contribute USD 50,000 to the Core Fund; and (4) partnership in environmental cooperation should be deepened and develop NEASPEC for better cooperation within and beyond this mechanism. The representative also introduced the five concepts of China's national policy to protect environment; alongside international cooperation in environment has been one of China's priorities in multilateral cooperation. The representative also announced that China will host an international conference on eco-protection in Guiyang during this July and welcomed participation of Meeting participants.

6. The representative of Japan introduced the implementation of environmentally-related SDGs in Japan. In this regard, the representative highlighted the efforts of the Government for promoting cooperation with stakeholders including meetings with multi-stakeholders such as the civil society, private sector and the academia, to provide greater momentum and motivate participation of each other. The representative also introduced Japan's cooperation with the ASEAN by supporting activities in Environmentally-Sustainable Cities (ESCs) as well as model-city building programmes. Furthermore, a meeting will be held in Hanoi on 3-4 March 2016 to discuss and implementation of SDGs to support cities and to strengthen city networks as well as enhancing cooperation.

7. The representative of Mongolia introduced the National Green Development Strategy adopted in 2014 and progress in formulating a new national document on the implementation of SDGs. The objectives of these documents are in line with the NEASPEC Strategic Plan. The representative also highlighted that Mongolia is especially interested in three areas of NEASPEC on nature conservation, low carbon cities, and desertification and land degradation.

8. The representative of the Republic of Korea (ROK) noted the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development from 2016 and that ROK will make significant contributions to achieve these goals. He recognized the increasing need for regional cooperation to tackle air pollution and climate change, as well as to protect transborder endangered species and marine areas. The representative highlighted the need to find

synergies with existing environment-related frameworks in North-East Asia, and NEASPEC's role as in bridging experts of member States in its programme areas. He also considered the NEASEPC Strategic Plan to be a good launching point to expand environmental cooperation in North-East Asia.

9. The representative of the Russian Federation mentioned that the Russian government attaches great importance to the expansion and strengthening of environmental protection in the subregion, in both bilateral and multilateral forms. He introduced the Russian Federation's adoption of legislation on the implementation of best available technology with five additional legal instruments. The representative noted the importance of NEASPEC in addressing key issues of cross-border cooperation in the subregion and reiterated the need to implement the proposed project on marine and coastal specially protected areas. He also stressed the need to avoid duplication with other environmental programs operating in the subregion.

10. In a new departure for NEASPEC, a roundtable discussion was arranged to discuss the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with a number of experts from UN and other agencies participating in it. These experts included Mr. Jong Soo Yoon, UNOSD; Mr. Naoyuki Yoshino, ADBI; Mr. Kazuhiko Takemoto, UNUIASS, Mr. Hideyuki Mori, IGES; and Alexander Tkalin, NOWPAP. Mr. Kilaparti Ramakrishna, Director of UNESCAP-ENEA Office moderated the discussion at the request of the Chair of SOM-20.

11. Mr. Jong Soo Yoon, Head of the UN Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD) led the roundtable discussion with a presentation containing an overview of sustainable development issues including the planetary boundaries, social foundation, universality and linkages of SDGs and their targets. He introduced the UNDS Common Approach: MAPS (i.e. mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support). Mr. Yoon also highlighted the importance of the regional level follow-up and review as outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular, to share best practices and experiences, as well as drawing on national-level reviews and contribute at the global level.

12. Mr. Naoyuki Yoshino Dean of the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) presented the economic effects of infrastructure investment and environmental finance. He drew on the example of a proposed financial scheme for wind power in Japan, and discussed ways in which governments can subsidize renewable energy for long-term viability of clean energy production. For instance, Mr. Yoshino suggested that this can be achieved through measuring the externality of fossil-fuel power generation, and transfer to renewable energy production in the form of taxation.

13. Mr. Kazuhiko Takemoto Director of the UN University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability discussed challenges and opportunities for the subregion in achieving SDGs in his presentation. He highlighted the comparative advantages and wide range of development and emission status in North-East Asia. Mr. Takemoto identified priority SDGs for the subregion and key challenging issues, as well as proposed approaches to achieve SDGs through: (i) establishing subregional and national-based targets and

indicators; (ii) multi-level regular and inclusive reviews; (iii) peer learning; (iv) technology facilitation mechanism; and (iv) High-Level Political Forum (HLPF).

14. Mr. Hideyuki Mori President the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) introduced IGES' works on SDGs to support readiness and implementation across sectors and countries. These include: the ASEAN Environmentally Sustainable Cities initiative, for supporting subnational readiness; IGES' research and collaboration with important initiatives for the private sector such as the Global Compact and the utilization of flagship products including the SDGs Compass and SDGs Industry Matrix; and funding projects on indicators for integrating and implementing SDGs in Asia, which includes data collection and development of a database. In addition to subregional considerations, he also highlighted the importance of having regional perspectives that include all subregions.

15. Mr. Alexander Tkalin Coordinator of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP) introduced the works of NOWPAP and their Medium-Term Strategy (2012-2017) with five themes on climate change, biodiversity, pollution prevention and control, coastal and river basin management; and regular assessment on the state of the marine environment.

16. The SOM-20 participants joined the discussion and appreciated the interventions of the experts.

F. Presentations and discussions on substantive agenda items (Agenda items 5, 6, 7 and 8)

17. The Meeting had presentations from the Secretariat on agenda item 5: Review of programme planning and implementation; agenda item 6: Review of the Strategic Plan of NEASPEC; and agenda item 8: Review of the core fund; followed by interventions from member States. Key outcomes of discussions on the agenda items are included as the Conclusions and Recommendation in the Report of the Meeting.

18. On Agenda item 5, the Meeting also had a presentation from Mr. Kazuya Fujiwara from the Asia-Pacific Integrated Model (AIM) Team, introducing the application of AIM methodology on Asia's low carbon cities challenge; and a presentation by Mr. Jiro Sato from Asia Center for Air Pollution Research (ACAP) on recent progress of the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET).

G. Venue, date and provisional agenda of the Twenty-first Senior Officials Meeting (Agenda item 9)

19. The Meeting discussed the venue, date and agenda of the twenty-first Senior Officials Meeting. The Meeting expressed its appreciation to the Government of Republic of

Korea for generously offering to host the next Meeting during the first quarter of 2017. The proposed dates, venue and the provisional agenda would be announced by the Secretariat in consultation with the host Government in due course.

H. Other matters
(Agenda item 10)

20. The Meeting expressed appreciation to the Government of Japan for generously hosting the Twentieth Senior Officials Meeting and for its warm hospitality and the excellent arrangements for the Meeting, and to the Secretariat for the excellent preparation of the Meeting.

I. Adoption of the report
(Agenda item 11)

21. The Meeting adopted the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Senior Officials Meeting on 2 February 2016. 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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