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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

REPORT OF

**THE SIXTH MEETING OF SENIOR OFFICIALS ON ENVIRONMENTAL
COOPERATION IN NORTH-EAST ASIA**

Seoul, 9-10 March 2000

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**RECOMMENDATIONS AND MATTERS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF
THE COMMISSION AND THE GOVERNING BODIES
OF ALL COLLABORATING AGENCIES**

1. The role of Senior Officials Meetings should be further strengthened as a forum of policy dialogue on environmental issues.
2. The meetings of senior officials should play a significant role by providing valuable input to the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2000 coupled with ECO ASIA 2000 and the forthcoming RIO+10 Assembly of 2002. It was stressed that the participation by the countries of the subregion with different development patterns and levels of development was expected to vitalize the subregional cooperative efforts and also play a significant role at facilitating global efforts for environmental cooperation.
3. The Meeting adopted the Vision Statement for Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia and recommended that it together with the Framework of NEASPEC should provide policy guidance to NEASPEC in the 21st Century and that the countries should effectively implement its components so as to make a valuable contribution for environmental enhancement in the subregion.
4. The Meeting emphasized the need for further development of the present Framework for NEASPEC into a comprehensive programme for environmental cooperation, preferably by the Eighth Meeting of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia.
5. The Meeting requested the ESCAP secretariat to administer a “Core fund for North-East Asian Environmental Cooperation”, should one or more participating countries make voluntary contribution for promoting subregional environmental cooperation. The fund could be utilized for projects adopted by the meeting of senior officials and aimed at enhancing subregional environmental cooperation.
6. The Meeting expressed its gratitude to the Republic of Korea for its generous contribution of US\$ 100,000 as a step towards the core fund for North-East Asian Environmental Cooperation.

7. NEASPEC should develop and promote regional environmental cooperation projects on common concerns and make meaningful contribution for dealing with global environmental challenges. Efforts and approaches similar to the project on “Demonstration and On-site Workshop in coal-fired power plants” should be continued for dealing with other priority environmental issues of the subregion.
8. NEASPEC, on the basis of consultation and consensus, should be aimed at strengthening environmental, managerial, and technical capacity-building including technology transfer of the participating countries.
9. The Meeting requested all the participating countries, donor agencies and collaborating agencies to continue to provide enhanced support so that the activities and projects under NEASPEC could be implemented at an accelerated pace in line with the Framework of NEASPEC as well as the Vision Statement adopted at the Meeting.
10. The Meeting welcomed the offer of the Government of the People’s Republic of China to generously host the Seventh Meeting of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia subject to availability of funds.

I. PROCEEDINGS

A. Environment and Sustainable Development Policies and Critical Issues in North-East Asia

(Item 4 of the agenda)

11. The Meeting noted the domestic policies and measures presented by the individual participating countries on protection of the environment which included public and private sector cooperation, raising environmental awareness, introducing basic laws and regulatory framework, as well as support for NEASPEC.
12. The Meeting stressed that the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation offered a good opportunity for the participating countries to discuss issues of common concern and forge environmental cooperation.

13. The Meeting reiterated that the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 would continue to provide policy guidance of NEASPEC. The principle of the respect for sovereignty, right to development, indispensability between environment and economic development, and common but differentiated responsibility as stated in the Rio Declaration would constitute the basis for subregional cooperation efforts under of NEASPEC.

14. The Meeting reiterated the importance of the meetings of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia as a forum which allowed for an extensive discussion of environmental issues at the intergovernmental level and successfully rendered the overall policy guidance on environmental cooperation in North-East Asia.

15. The Meeting noted that several forums existed in the subregion for promotion of subregional policy dialogue. It emphasized that the subregional dialogue should be further extended which could provide opportunity of the participation of the local governments, the private sector and the civil society.

16. The Meeting recognized that the ministerial conferences played an important role at policy guidance for coordination and harmonization of environmental activities at the highest level. In this context, the NEASPEC should pay attention to the achievements and recommendations of the ministerial level conferences including the Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting among China, Japan and the Republic of Korea, and the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2000 among others.

17. The Meeting recognized that sharing of available information on environment was an essential step for intensifying subregional environmental cooperation.

18. The Meeting emphasized that development of programme through step by step and practical approach would lend vitality to this cooperative arrangement and achieve substantial results. Sensitive environmental issues if introduced to projects and activities of NEASPEC would erode its sound and healthy development.

19. The Meeting recognized that significant and tangible results were achieved through the implementation of various projects such as Demonstration and On-site Workshops in coal –fired

power plants which promoted technical exchange and human resources development for dealing with important environmental issues of the subregion.

20. The Meeting recommended that further efforts should be made for raising public awareness about the activities of NEASPEC to draw public support. This would assist in promoting enhanced ownership of NEASPEC in the subregion.

21. The Meeting invited the participation of representatives of NOWPAP, EANET, ECO ASIA, NEAC and TRADP for information sharing on issues discussed at the subregional level, among the ministers and experts which would assist in developing effective programme for NEASPEC. It was stressed that the dialogues at various forums would provide the wider views on the environmental issues which would enable NEASPEC to develop and implement projects of common concern.

22. The representative of ADB informed the Meeting of the Bank's decision on financial assistance for the implementation of the project in the three priority areas endorsed by the Fourth Meeting of Senior Officials. He commended the initiative of the Government of the Republic of Korea and the host institutions on the establishment of the subregional centres, and emphasized that supports from participating countries were very essential for successful implementation of the projects.

23. The representative of UNEP emphasized the joint effort being made by UNEP and ESCAP in the preparation of the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2000. He also brought to attention of the Meeting, the organization of the 6th Special Session of UNEP Government Council, called "Ministerial Global Environment Forum", to be held in Malmo, Sweden from 29 to 31 May 2000, and requested the active participation of environment ministers from NEASPEC countries in this event.

**B. Report of the Preparatory Meeting of the Sixth Meeting of Senior Officials
on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia**

(Item 5 of the agenda)

24. The Meeting had before it the report of the Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation held on 8-9 March 2000 in Seoul. The report was introduced to the

Meeting by Mr Choi Jai-chul, Chairman of the Preparatory Meeting. The report contained the comments and recommendations relating to the institutional and financial matters, review of ongoing activities and project development for NEASPEC. In addition, the Meeting reviewed the preparation of the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific to be held in Kitakyushu, Japan on 31 August-5 September 2000.

25. The Meeting reviewed the report. The amended report that was adopted by the Meeting is attached as Annex.

C. Venue, date and agenda of the seventh meeting of senior officials

(Item 6 of the agenda)

26. The Meeting discussed the venue, date and agenda of the Seventh Meeting of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia. The representative of China offered to host the Seventh Meeting of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia subject to the availability of resources. The secretariat together with partner collaborating agencies and participating countries were requested to secure possible funding support to organize this Meeting. The date and duration of the Meeting would be decided by the secretariat in consultation with the host country and other participating countries.

27. The tentative agenda of the Meeting, as agreed by the Meeting, is as follows:

1. Opening session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of agenda.
4. Environment and development policies and issues for North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation.
5. Implementation of the recommendations of the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2000 in North-East Asia.
6. Programme planning and implementation:
 - (a) Endorsement of new projects;
 - (b) Implementation of ongoing projects;
 - (c) Identification of project ideas.

7. Modalities of administration of core fund for North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation.
8. Other matters.
9. Adoption of the report.

II. ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

28. The Sixth of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia was held at Seoul, from 9 to 10 March 2000. It was organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and hosted by the Government of Republic of Korea.

A. Attendance

29. The Meeting was attended by government representatives from China, Japan, Mongolia, Republic of Korea and Russian Federation. It was also attended by the representatives of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

B. Opening statement

30. The Meeting was welcomed by Ms. Kayoko Mizuta, Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP. Expressing her sincere appreciation to all the participants for their contribution, she highlighted the tangible results from the Preparatory Meeting, in particular, discussion on the establishment of the core fund and formulation of vision statement, as well as a concrete step forward to the implementation of the some of the project elements adopted by earlier meetings of senior officials. She then expressed her expectation to the Meeting of Senior Officials, which was to take up far reaching decisions for enhancing the subregional cooperation, based on the report of the Preparatory Meeting.

31. The Meeting was opened by His Excellency Mr Chung Eui-yong, Deputy Minister of Trade, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea. He addressed that one of the big achievements through NEASPEC over past years was the growing awareness of Northeast Asia as one environmental community, and based on the shared sense of community, the Sixth Meeting of Senior Officials should provided new impetus in NEASPEC activities. He stated that NEASPEC now needs to further strengthen its function as a policy dialogue forum to deal with environmental

cooperation so that it could provide policy guidelines for regional environmental cooperation with closer ties with other environmental cooperation bodies. Among efforts to establish institutional and financial mechanisms for more effective operation of NEASPEC, he described the creation of a core fund as a prerequisite. He announced that the Government of the Republic of Korea would contribute one hundred thousand US dollars to the core fund for this year. On the basis of concrete results of the Preparatory Meeting, the Sixth Meeting of Senior Officials would prove to be a new milestone in the history of NEASPEC.

32. The representatives of China, Japan and Mongolia made statements at the opening session indicating their commitment for the intensification of the subregional environmental cooperation.

C. Election of officers

33. Mr Oh Haeng-Kyeom (Republic of Korea) was elected Chairperson. Four Vice-Chairpersons were elected: Mr. Wu Hailong (China), Mr Hiroshi Yoshida (Japan), Mr D. Enkhtaivan (Mongolia) and Mr Yuriy N. Isakov (Russian Federation). Mr Wu Hailong (China) was also elected as Rapporteur.

D. Adoption of the agenda

34. The Meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of agenda.
4. Environment and sustainable development policies and critical issues in North-East Asia.
5. Report of the Preparatory Meeting of the Sixth Meeting of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia.
6. Venue, date and agenda of the Seventh Meeting of Senior Officials.
7. Other matters.
8. Adoption of the report.

III. OTHER MATTERS

(Item 7 of the agenda)

35. The Meeting expressed its deep appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Korea for generously hosting the Preparatory Meeting and the Meeting of Senior Officials. It expressed special thanks H.E. Mr Chung Eui-yong, Deputy Minister for Trade of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade for his inaugural address. The Meeting also expressed deep gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Korea for the pioneering effort in promoting this cooperation and the important step for establishment of the core fund of NEASPEC with the pledge for contribution.

36. The Meeting requested the secretariat to convey the outcome of this Meeting to the focal point of Democratic People's Republic of Korea to facilitate their participation at the Seventh Meeting of the Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation to be held in China in 2001.

IV. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

(Item 8 of the agenda)

37. The Meeting adopted its report on 10 March 2000.
