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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

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

Kobe, Japan, 24-26 February 1999

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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 Meeting recommended that the Framework together with the recommendations of the UNCED, the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21 and the statement of commitment as adopted by the 19th Special Session of United Nations General Assembly (UNGASS) should continue to provide the overall policy guidance for promoting environmental cooperation in North-East Asia. Furthermore, the step-by-step and practical approach should continue to be the basis for defining programmes.
2. The Meeting expressed that North-East Asian Subregional Programme of Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) provided the only framework of its kind in the subregion for modest but practical environmental cooperation. The Meeting further stressed that the cooperation among the countries of North-East Asia was indispensable in order for future generations to realize a century of peace and prosperity for which the opportunities provided by the framework should be fully utilized.
3. The Meeting recognized the urgent need for exchanges of views on policy matters among the neighbouring countries for environmental protection and sustainable development for which the North-East Asian countries had accumulated valuable experience and expertise. Those should be fully utilized for promoting further cooperation.
4. The Meeting recommended that the projects within NEASPEC should be practical, concrete and result-oriented. The Meeting encouraged the continuance of various subregional environmental cooperation activities with focus on the efforts at capacity building and upgrading and exchange of information.
5. The Meeting reaffirmed that the four projects that had been approved at the 4th SOM should build on the tangible results of the completed projects and requested the ADB and other collaborating agencies to continue their support to those projects in order to maintain

and enhance this subregional cooperation, as their contribution to the follow-up to UNCED in the subregion.

6. The Meeting reaffirmed that the subregional environmental cooperation should follow a practical approach and should be developed on a step-by-step basis on agreed priority areas to focus on implementing the agreed upon projects. It also agreed that the series of projects on energy and air pollution had yielded modest but tangible results and had been very well received by the participating countries.

7. The Meeting reaffirmed the resolution adopted at the 4th SOM in 1998 and recommended the continuation of the existing arrangement for securing financial support for implementing NEASPEC on a project funding basis by the ESCAP secretariat, in cooperation with its partner agencies namely UNEP, UNDP, ADB and the World Bank. The need to further elaborate the institutional and financial arrangements was also recognized.

8. The Meeting expressed deep appreciation to the ESCAP secretariat, ADB and UNEP for their financial and technical support for the current projects and requested for their continuing support and further collaboration for NEASPEC.

9. The Meeting further reaffirmed that the ESCAP secretariat, in cooperation with its partner agencies namely UNEP, UNDP, ADB and the World Bank should continue to provide professional, secretariat and financial support for furthering the activities of the subregional cooperation.

10. The Meeting welcomed the offer of the Government of the Republic of Korea to host the Sixth Meeting of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia during the first quarter of the year 2000. The hope was expressed that the participating countries would send senior officials at a high level to the Meeting.

I. PROCEEDINGS

A. **Policy Guidance on North-East Asian Subregional Environmental Cooperation for the Twenty-First Century in the Light of the Outcome of the Nineteenth Special Session of the General Assembly, held in June 1997**

(Item 4 of the agenda)

11. The Meeting considered the document ENR/SO/ECNA(5)/1 presenting an overview of the regional and subregional activities to seek policy guidance for environmental cooperation in North-East Asia towards the twenty-first century.

12. The participating countries made policy statements for guiding subregional cooperation. The Meeting recognized the importance of follow-up activities of the UNGASS, the preparation for the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific to be held in 2000, the regional follow-up to the global environmental conventions, and the increasing role of major groups with their supportive activities in the subregion for protection of the environment and sustainable development.

13. The Meeting expressed its appreciation regarding the wide ranging cooperative activities at various levels, noting the successful examples of the North-East Asia Environmental Conference, the North West Pacific Action Plan, Tumen River Area Development Programme, the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia and the tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting among China, Japan and Republic of Korea held in January 1999 at Seoul. The Meeting recognized that those activities were in accord with the decisions of UNCED and the 19th special session of the UN General Assembly.

14. The Meeting considered it important to enhance communication among countries through a variety of ways aimed at successful formulation of programmes in order to contribute to a sustainable global society in the 21st Century in the context of preparation for the Earth Summit + 10 scheduled for 2002.

B. Project Review: Ongoing Projects and New Projects

(Item 5 of the agenda)

15. Under this agenda item, the meeting considered document ENR/SO/ECNA(5)/2 together with conference room papers 3, 4 and 5 on Regional Project on Technical Assistance for Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia; Outline of Training Manual on Pollution Reduction from Coal-fired Power Plants and the report of the Expert Group Meeting on Emission Monitoring and Estimation respectively.

16. The Meeting noted the conclusions and recommendations of the regional project as an example of successful subregional technical cooperation. The Meeting further reviewed the following four projects already endorsed with regard to their funding and implementation:

- Project I: - Pollution reduction in coal-fired power plants.
- Project II: – Environmental monitoring, data collection, comparability and analysis.
- Project III: – Efficiency improvement of electrostatic precipitators in existing power plants.
- Project IV - Demonstration of dry sorbent duct injection FGD technology.

17. In the above context, the Meeting took note of the “Outline of Training Manual on Pollution Reduction from Coal-Fired Power Plants” prepared under Project I and expressed deep appreciation for the expert assistance provided by the Korea Electric Power Research Institute (KEPRI) in the development of the outline.

18. In respect of Project II, the Meeting affirmed that the proposed subregional centre to support the project should be called “subregional centre” instead of “subregional clearing house centre”. The Meeting agreed that the project will see the establishment of a subregional centre at the National Institute for Environmental Research (NIER) in the Republic of Korea which would have the capacity to host training courses on environmental monitoring; store, process, and on analysis of available information on environmental

monitoring from participating countries in the subregion; and to communicate with environmental monitoring centres within each of the North-East Asian countries and international environmental programmes (such as Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP)) for the purpose of sharing information. The centre would also have the capability to gather and disseminate information on updated environmental monitoring technologies, methodologies, analytical techniques, and air pollution models.

19. The Meeting took note of the request of the Expert Group Meeting on the future activities to improve emission monitoring and estimation capacities, as a part of Project II. It identified the following activities to be included in the project:

- collection and analysis of available emission estimation data from the participating countries
- case studies to learn more about emission monitoring and estimation methodologies
- development of recommendations on methodologies of emission monitoring and estimation and an establishment of a regional task force of experts for this purpose
- development of recommendations for further promotion of the follow-up projects.

20. In relation to the scope of the above-mentioned activities, the Meeting agreed that the possibility to develop emission monitoring and estimation of NO_x and VOC substances were to be further studied, while the development of recommendations on methodologies on emission monitoring and estimation could be undertaken for SO₂.

21. The Meeting welcomed Japan's proposal to contribute to the above-mentioned activities by commissioning a research project and convening task force meetings. The Meeting stressed the importance to implement the project in close cooperation with the participating countries. Plans for the research activities and establishment of a task force

should be undertaken in consultation with the participating countries through the secretariat and the national focal points.

22. The representative of ADB expressed the keen interest of his organization in further promotion of subregional cooperation bearing in mind the tangible results achieved in the earlier technical assistance project as well as to give serious consideration for funding some of the additional projects endorsed by the 4th SOM.

C. Implementation of the Framework for the North-East Asian Subregional Programme of Environmental Cooperation: Institutional and financial Mechanisms; Other Issues

(Item 6 of the agenda)

23. The Meeting considered document ENR/SO/ECNA(5)/3 on the options for institutional and financial mechanisms for NEASPEC.

24. The Meeting emphasized that the Framework, as adopted at the 3rd SOM and endorsed by the 53rd ESCAP Commission Session, provided an excellent basis for institutional and financial arrangement and there was no need at present to extend the scope of such arrangement beyond those included in the Framework. The Meeting, however, recognized that the Framework would continue to be an interim agreement and could be developed further, as and when considered necessary.

25. The Meeting reaffirmed that SOM would continue to be the governing body for policy decisions on all substantive matters and, as such, should continue to be the most appropriate and valuable institutional arrangement for policy guidance. The Meeting recommended that the participation at SOM should be at senior level, to be decided by the individual participating countries. The Meeting was of the view that there was no need for institutionalized ministerial participation. It was, however, stated that higher level segment might be considered should there be a need to facilitate important issues, e.g. those related to the evolution of future institutional and financial arrangements. It also noted that improving

the visibility of the Programme could be helped by mobilizing greater public support.

26. The Meeting recognized the need for policy guidance to the secretariat during the interregnum periods of two SOMs and recommended that the secretariat should consult the governments through their nominated national focal points.

27. The Meeting agreed that in view of enhanced financial implications in the establishment of a secretariat and the current financial crisis in the participating countries, it was premature to consider establishment of any new secretariat arrangement. It was also decided to keep the various options for the secretariat pending till such time as the senior officials decide to take up the matter again.

28. The Meeting recognized that there was the need for guidance by the senior officials for programme planning and implementation. It, therefore, agreed that half to one day might be devoted in subsequent SOMs for discussing the programme planning and implementation matters.

29. The Meeting noted that there were a number of subregional initiatives and projects for environmental cooperation in North-East Asia. In order to maximize the benefits, the Meeting recommended inter-secretariat information sharing and exchange on such regional initiatives and projects.

30. The Meeting noted that with the implementation of UN reform, the ESCAP secretariat environmental programme had undergone reduction both in staff and financial resources. It, therefore, expressed its sincere appreciation to the Government of Japan for its offer to generously dispatch an NRL expert to the Environment Section of the secretariat, whose function, among others, would be the implementation of NEASPEC activities. It also expressed the hope that other participating governments could second additional experts to assist the secretariat in strengthening that cooperation.

31. The Meeting agreed that local government authorities could play an important role in supporting the cooperation promoted under NEASPEC. It, however, felt that the initiative

should take place on voluntary basis by interested parties and coordinated by the concerned national governments.

32. The Meeting noted that SOM IV had resolved to make efforts toward financial arrangements including a trust fund and reach a consensus on the modality of the trust fund possibly at its Sixth Meeting. However, the Meeting was not in a position to reach consensus on this very matter, since divergent views were expressed by participating countries. The Meeting, therefore, requested the ESCAP secretariat to further elaborate options and alternatives for financial arrangements for consideration at the Sixth Meeting. The ESCAP secretariat was requested to consult the partner agencies and relevant donor countries and organizations regarding the extent of financial support which could be available to the Programme and report the results of such consultation at the next SOM.

33. The Meeting urged that each participating country should also make efforts to secure financial resources from bilateral and multilateral donor and collaborating agencies. In that regard, their delegations to the governing bodies of the partner agencies should highlight the activities of NEASPEC for attracting additional financial support for the Programme. In order for the bilateral and multilateral donors to join in funding approved projects, the Meeting suggested that it might be useful to invite potential donors to the Meeting of Senior Officials, as appropriate. However, the Meeting felt that such invitation should be extended after having indication of donor's interest to support the projects.

34. Additionally, the Meeting noted that the private sector could be an important source of financing the activities of NEASPEC and, therefore, requested the secretariat and the participating governments to explore possibility of private sector contribution to and participation in the programmes on a project funding basis.

D. Venue, date and provisional agenda of the Sixth Meeting of Senior Officials on

Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia

(Item 7 of the agenda)

35. The provisional agenda of the Sixth Meeting as considered by the Meeting was as follows:

1. Review of implementation of Agenda 21 together with environment and sustainable development policies and critical issues in North-East Asia, taking into account the outcome of the nineteenth special of the United Nations General Assembly held in June 1997.
2. Identification and endorsement of new projects and assess progress in implementation of ongoing projects.
3. Implementation of the Framework for the North-East Asian Subregional Programme of Environmental Cooperation, including institutional and financial arrangements.
4. Venue, date and agenda of the Seventh Meeting of Senior Officials.
5. Other matters.
6. Adoption of the report.

III. ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

36. The Fifth Meeting of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia was held in Kobe, Japan, from 24 to 26 February 1999. It was organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and sponsored by the Government of Japan and City of Kobe, Japan.

A. Attendance

37. The Meeting was attended by government representatives from China, Japan, Mongolia, Republic of Korea and Russian Federation. It was attended by representatives of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP). The officials from the City of Kobe, Japan attended as observers.

B. Opening statement

38. The Meeting was opened by the Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCAP. She thanked

the Government of Japan and the City of Kobe for hosting the Meeting. She stated that the regional economic and social conditions were aggravated by the financial crisis and climatic anomalies and natural disasters during the past years and under such a situation the initiation, evolution and development of the subregional environmental cooperation in North-East Asia was a notable achievement that was brought by the participating countries themselves in line with both Agenda 21 and the nineteenth Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly held in 1997. She further stated that the regional cooperation under NEASPEC increased human capacities for efficient operation and improved environmental control in existing coal-fired power plants, technology transfer and cooperation through dissemination of information on the efficiency and clean operation. She also mentioned that the resolution adopted at the Fourth Meeting of Senior Officials, held at Moscow in January 1998, on its future course of actions on institutional and financial modalities of NEASPEC should be further discussed to make progress.

39. The Honourable Hirohisa Kurihara, State Secretary of the Environment Agency of Japan, delivered the inaugural address. He welcomed the participants on behalf of the Government of Japan and thanked the ESCAP, the Asian Development Bank and the United Nations Environment Programme for their roles in promoting environmental cooperation in North-East Asia. He recalled that since the First Meeting of Senior Officials in 1993, there had been a series of follow-up meetings of the participating countries and reminded the Meeting that with the 21st Century nearly upon us, it was imperative that we further intensified concrete initiatives to translate Agenda 21 into practice. He expressed the intention of Japan to contribute even more actively to initiatives for environmental conservation in the North-East Asian region and wished the Meeting success towards achieving its objectives.

40. The Honourable Kazutoshi Sasayama, the Mayor of the City of Kobe welcomed the participants and expressed that it was an honour to host this significant meeting to discuss

environmental cooperation for the 21st century. Kobe City is blessed with nature such as Setonaikai (Inland Sea) and Mt. Rokko and the port of Kobe which contribute to an atmosphere of an international city. Kobe has tackled environmental problems earlier than most cities. In 1972, the Mayor participated in the UN Conference on Environment and Mankind, which was held in Stockholm, where Kobe City was declared as the City for Human and Environment. This declaration gave Kobe the direction to put environment protection as the fundamental of its policy. He further stated that at the UNCED held in 1992, Kobe City made presentation about our basic policy on urban development and environment conservation. UNCED became the trigger to start the Committee to promote global environment and citizen's forum for global environment.

41. The representative of ADB stated that in line with its strategic objectives of environmental protection and promotion of regional cooperation, the ADB as requested by the 4th SOM is preparing a follow on technical assistance for this highly significant enterprise of regional environmental cooperation in association with other bilateral, national and multilateral organizations. In preparing the follow on technical assistance, the Bank was highly encouraged by the enthusiasm demonstrated by the cooperating countries in the implementation of the first phase of the project and the initiatives of the Governments of Japan and Republic of Korea in arranging significant support to the activities of the second phase.

42. The representative of the United Nations Environment Programme conveyed UNEP's commitment to support NEASPEC within the relevant decisions of the Governing Council and available resources. He informed the participants of the decisions taken at the 20th Session of the Governing Council to restructure UNEP on a functional basis and stated that UNEP will continue to collaborate with ESCAP, which serves as the secretariat of NEASPEC and has done so with distinction, and other partner agencies such as the ADB, UNDP and the World Bank, to make available, to the extent possible, its specialized expertise for the

environmental projects undertaken within the framework of NEASPEC.

C. Election of officers

43. Mr Hiroshi Yoshida (Japan) was elected Chairperson. Four Vice-Chairpersons were elected: Mr Zhong Shukong (China), Mr Davaa Basandorj (Mongolia), Mr Seok-Young Choi (Republic of Korea) and Mr Alexander A. Solovianov (Russian Federation). Mr Seok-Young Choi (Republic of Korea) was elected to serve concurrently as Rapporteur.

D. Adoption of the agenda

44. The Meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the Meeting.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Policy guidance on North-East Asian subregional environmental cooperation for the twenty-first century in the light of the outcome of the nineteenth Special Session of the General Assembly, held in June 1997.
5. Project review:
 - (a) Ongoing projects;
 - (b) New projects.
6. Implementation of the Framework for the North-East Asian Subregional Programme of Environmental Cooperation:
 - (a) Institutional and financial mechanisms;
 - (b) Other issues.
7. Venue, date and provisional agenda of the Sixth Meeting of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia.
8. Other matters.
9. Adoption of the report.

IV. OTHER MATTERS

(Item 8 of the agenda)

45. The Meeting expressed its deep gratitude and sincere thanks to the Government of

Japan, the City of Kobe and the Honourable Mayor for the warm hospitality and excellent hosting facilities and the field visit accorded to the Fifth Meeting of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia.

V. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

(Item 9 of the agenda)

46. The report was unanimously adopted on 26 February 1999.

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