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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

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

Ulaanbaatar, 20 June 2002

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I. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

1. The Meeting commended the significant progress made during the previous year in the implementation of NEASPEC projects with the invaluable support provided by the host institutions for the relevant activities, such as the National Institute of Environmental Research, Republic of Korea and the Korean Electric Power Research Institute. The Meeting reaffirmed the usefulness of the ongoing projects, in particular, for capacity building in the participating countries. The Meeting noted with appreciation the financial contributions provided by the Asian Development Bank, the Government of the Republic of Korea and the Government of Japan in implementing these projects and activities.

2. The Meeting took note of the observations of the Mid-term Review Meeting for the Regional Technical Assistance for Transboundary Environmental Cooperation in Northeast Asia supported by ADB, held in Ulaanbaatar on 18 June, 2002, i.e. Reallocation of fund was required on an urgent basis so that the new budget allocation should better accommodate the provisions set in the Workplans; Measures for improving the effectiveness of the training course included readjustment of curriculum according to the needs of trainees, introduction of presentation by trainees and exchange of information among trainees, and; The timetable of the Second Training Course on Pollution Reduction in Coal-fired Power Plants, which was tentatively scheduled for October 2002, should be announced well in advance, so that countries have enough time to consider most appropriately qualified trainees, such as plant managers.

3. On the Project I - Pollution Reduction in Coal-fired Power Plants, the representative of Republic of Korea informed the Meeting that the present training activities would be duly completed by KEPRI according to the Workplan, and that they were optimistic about the continuation of training activities by KEPRI. The Meeting requested that KEPRI should continue hosting the subregional training activities and encouraged the Government of the Republic of Korea to make further efforts in this regard. The Government of the Republic of Korea assured that it would keep other NEASPEC countries informed of progress on this matter.

4. On the Project II - Environmental Monitoring, Data Collection, Comparability and Analysis, the Meeting recommended that NEACEDT should put further emphasis on early

delivery of the substantive outputs, as identified in the Workplan, in particular, including the analytical report on monitoring activities and methodologies in North-east Asian countries. All the participating countries were reminded to communicate their latest air quality data to NEACEDT. The Meeting took notes with appreciation Japan's intention to further contribute to capacity building on air pollutant emission monitoring, and contribution of the Japan Environment Technology Association (JETA) to this activity.

5. On the Project III - Efficiency Improvement of Electrostatic Precipitators in Existing Power Plants, the Meeting was informed of the progress in informal consultation towards the organization of the first on-site workshop on particulate control in electric power plants in Guizhou Province, China. The proposal is to be formalized and implemented as soon as the necessary financial resources have been confirmed.

6. The Meeting proposed that the core fund might be utilized on an emergency basis, for temporary funding on the project activities which were already approved by the Meeting of Senior Officials and for which financial resources were confirmed. The Meeting considered this contingency funding appropriate in order to avoid any disruptions in the implementation of project activities.

7. ESCAP Secretariat was requested to continue its efforts, in cooperation with relevant international organizations and donor countries, to explore new and additional financial resources acknowledging that sustained and diversified financial basis is indispensable for steady and effective project planning and implementation.

8. The Meeting noted with appreciation that the secretariat was giving concerted attention to the prevention and control of dust and sand storms (yellow sand) in North East Asia, and for playing a coordinating role in close collaboration with UNEP and UNCCD, in the development of a GEF project, which was a priority area of NEASPEC

9. The Meeting looked forward to the development of the GEF project on dust and sand storms as soon as possible through collaborative efforts of international organizations. It also took note that the next subregional stakeholder consultation for the project planning will be held in Bangkok.

10. The subregional initiative towards the development of the dust and sand storm project was welcomed and it was stressed that any institutional mechanism developed for the purpose

should be linked to the existing mechanisms, in particular NEASPEC.

11. The Meeting welcomed the support by the Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting among China, Japan and Korea (TEMM), held in Seoul from 20 to 21 April 2002, and the Four Environment Ministers' Meeting on the Yellow Sand Issue in North East Asia, held in Bali, Indonesia on 8 June 2002, for developing a project on sand and dust storms by cooperative efforts of international organizations.

12. Undertaking work on the nature conservation was strongly supported with the involvement of stakeholders and several areas for action were recognized such as capacity building, exchange of information and expertise, data base management, scientific research and use of Geographical Information System (GIS).

13. The Meeting recommended to establish a working group of national focal points on nature conservation to identify priority areas for development of projects in nature conservation, initiate exchange of information to grasp issues and problems and to bring issues to the attention of governments for cooperative action. It took note of the proposal of Mongolia to host a meeting of Working Group on Nature Conservation in Mongolia.

14. Taking into consideration the limited resources available, the Meeting recommended that synergies should be developed with ongoing initiatives in the subregion in nature conservation and avoid duplication

15. The NEASPEC countries were encouraged to ratify the international conventions and protocols related to nature conservation, including the Convention on Migratory Species.

16. The Meeting noted UNEP's proposal on initiating activities related to chemicals and hazardous waste issues and on the environmental education. However, it felt that due to limited resources and capacity it was premature to undertake activities in those areas and recommended that concept papers for proposed activities be put on the NEASPEC website for future discussions.

17. ESCAP was requested to continue as the Secretariat of NEASPEC because the situation at present was not considered feasible for the establishment of an independent secretariat. The Meeting recognized that the issue of establishment/setting up of an independent secretariat will depend on the willingness of member countries. It therefore recommended to ESCAP to consult countries concerned and report to the Ninth Meeting of Senior Officials on

Environmental Cooperation in North East Asia. The issue could also be considered by the Ministerial Conference of NEASPEC to be organized back to back with the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific 2005.

18. The Meeting recommended that matters of NEASPEC, other than those related directly to projects, needing attention during the intersessional period (between Senior Official Meetings) should be resolved using telecommunication means.

19. The working group of national focal points for each project should deal with the matters related to projects.

20. The Meeting recommended that NEASPEC core fund should primarily be used by consensus for the projects recommended by the NEASPEC Senior Official Meetings (SOM).

21. The contribution to NEASPEC core fund should continue on voluntary basis and all NEASPEC member countries were encouraged to participate in the core fund as well as raise additional funds from external sources to enhance the sense of ownership of NEASPEC.

22. The Secretariat was requested to prepare a table of budget on annual basis for consideration by the Senior Officials Meeting of NEASPEC. Such a table for the period June 2002 to 2003 (SOM 8 to SOM 9) is attached (Table 1). The Meeting considered the budget given in table 1 and approved it. It also requested the Secretariat to report on the balance to the Ninth Meeting of Senior Officials.

23. Public awareness of NEASPEC should be raised both at the national and regional as well as global levels. Besides the Secretariat, countries should also strive to raise the awareness particularly at the national level.

24. Recommendations of NEASPEC should be presented to the ESCAP Commission Session and any feedback in this regard should be communicated to NEASPEC SOM.

25. The NEASPEC Website should be fully utilized and the meeting documents should be placed there for information and use by interested parties.

26. A brochure for NEASPEC should be prepared giving its history, objectives, functions and activities including the NEASPEC Framework and the Vision Statement and it should be disseminated widely. .

27. The Meeting noted the encouragement being given to the promotion of type II Partnership Initiatives and requested the secretariat to study the guidelines and submit the proposals to the Ninth Meeting of Senior Officials for its consideration.

28. It was recommended that representatives of relevant initiatives ongoing in North East Asia such as the North East Asian Conference on Environmental Cooperation (NEAC), Tumen River Area Development Programme (TRADP), Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET), TEMM, and Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP), should be invited to NEASPEC SOMs for exchange of information on their ongoing activities and development of synergies.

29. The Meeting welcomed the generous offer of the Government of the Russian Federation to host the Ninth Meeting of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia. The venue and date will be announced in due course.

II. PROCEEDINGS

A. Environment and development policies and issues for the North-East Asian Subregional Programme on Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC)

(Item 4 of the agenda)

30. The representative of the Republic of Korea highlighted the strategic vision for the future development of NEASPEC, with reference to the NEASPEC Framework agreed upon at SOM3 held in Ulaanbaatar in 1996, and the Vision Statement adopted at SOM6 held in Seoul in 2000, which *inter alia* articulated the evolution of present Framework into a more comprehensive programme. He emphasized the country's commitment to support this process in view of long-term development of NEASPEC.

31. The representative of China informed the Meeting that it attaches great importance to NEASPEC and stressed that technical cooperation activities of the NEASPEC projects had significantly benefited not only the country but also the whole subregion. She expressed satisfaction with the steps taken by the secretariat towards development of a GEF project for prevention and control of dust and sand storms in North East Asia, which was a priority area of NEASPEC.

32. The representative of Japan underscored the importance of synergy and partnership among countries, agencies and stakeholders in promoting the environmental cooperation in North-east Asia. He stressed on further efforts needed for effective development of environmental cooperation in North-east Asia, to which NEASPEC could significantly contribute by playing the vital coordinating role.

33. The representative of the Russian Federation referred to the country's strong presence in NEASPEC activities in the past, and assured the Meeting on their readiness to continue contributing to further promotion of the environmental cooperation in North-east Asia, in particular, by hosting the next year's Meeting of Senior Officials.

34. The representative of Mongolia pointed out that despite the diversity of the specific environment and development situations, countries in North-east Asia had a number of common elements and interests in managing the environment and promoting cooperation in this regard. He emphasized on further development of NEASPEC projects and willingness of Mongolia to actively participate in such activities. He also stressed that transfer of

information and experience was a vital component of NEASPEC project activities and was extremely useful to the countries.

35. The representatives of United Nations Environment Programme, the Asian Development Bank and United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification also made statements indicating their commitment to provide support to the subregional environmental cooperation.

B. Consideration of the Recommendations of the Preparatory Meeting of Experts

(Item 5 of the agenda)

36. The Meeting had before it the recommendations and conclusions of the Preparatory Meeting of Experts for the Eighth Meeting of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia held on 19-20 June 2002 in Ulaanbaatar. The recommendations and conclusions covered the issues of i) Programme Planning and Implementation, ii) Further Development of the North East Asian Subregional Cooperation (NEASPEC), and iii) Other matters.

37. The Meeting reviewed the recommendations and conclusions, and adopted them as its own recommendations/conclusions as presented in the paragraphs 1 to 29 of Section I.

C. Venue, Date and Provisional Agenda of the Ninth Meeting of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation in North-east Asia

(Item 6 of the agenda)

38. The Meeting discussed the venue, date and agenda of the Ninth Meeting of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia. The Government of the Russian Federation offered to host the Eighth Meeting of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia. The venue and date of the Meeting would be further consulted among the secretariat, the host country and other participating countries.

39. The proposed provisional agenda of the Meeting was as follows:

1. Opening session.
2. Election of officers.

3. Adoption of agenda.
4. Environment and Development Policies and Issues in North-east Asia:
 - (i) Exchange of information on national policies and experiences;
 - (ii) Further development of North-east Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC);
5. Consideration of the Recommendations of the Preparatory Meeting of Experts
6. Venue, date and agenda of the Tenth Meeting of Senior Officials
7. Other matters.
8. Adoption of the report.

III. ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

40. The Eighth Meeting of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia was held at Ulaanbaatar, on 20 June 2002. It was organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and hosted by the Government of Mongolia.

A. Attendance

41. 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), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and World Health Organization (WHO).

B. Opening session

42. In his welcome statement, Mr Ravi Sawhney, Director, Environment and Natural Resources Development Division of ESCAP, expressed his sincere appreciation to the Government of Mongolia for hosting this important meeting and for their kind hospitality and making excellent arrangements for it. He highlighted the tangible results that came out of the Preparatory Meeting of Experts, in particular, for their thorough review and guidance for

further effective implementation of NEASPEC projects; encouragement towards the promotion of type II Partnership Initiatives; formulation of a GEF project pm prevention and control of dust and sand storms in North East Asia; and, raising awareness and promotion of multi-stakeholder partnership for NEASPEC.

43. The Opening Statement of the Meeting was delivered by Mr. A. Bolat, Vice Minister for Nature and Environment, Mongolia. He emphasized that his government attached great importance to NEASPEC, as it has provided significant benefits to the participating countries, in particular, in the areas of capacity building and information exchange. He hoped that this Meeting of Senior Officials would make concrete and effective contribution to advancing the implementation of ongoing environmental cooperation in the subregion, such as the new arrangements for the use of Core Fund.

C. Election of officers

44. Ms. Navaan-Yunden Oyundar (Mongolia) was elected Chairperson.

D. Adoption of the agenda

45. The Meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the Meeting.
2. Election of Officers.
3. Adoption of the Agenda.
4. Environment and Development Policies and Issues for the North East Asian Subregional Programme of Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC).
5. Consideration of the Recommendation of the Preparatory Meeting of Experts.
6. Venue, Date and Provisional Agenda of the Eighth Meeting of Senior Officials.
7. Other Matters.
8. Adoption of the Report.

IV. OTHER MATTERS

(Item 7 of the agenda)

46. The Meeting expressed its deep appreciation to the Government of Mongolia for generously hosting the Preparatory Meeting and the Meeting of Senior Officials and for their warm hospitality and the excellent arrangements made for the Meetings.

V. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

(Item 8 of the agenda)

47. The Meeting adopted its report on 20 June 2002.

Table 1 Proposed Use of Core fund for the one year period from SOM8 to SOM9

| Purpose of Expenditure | Budget Line | | Amount (in US dollar) |
|--|-------------|--------|--------------------------|
| Secretariat Expense for one year (SOM8 - SOM9) | | | US\$15,820 |
| Staff Travel | 3200-00 | 10,000 | |
| Reporting | 5200-00 | 2,000 | |
| Sundry | 5300-00 | 2,000 | |
| Subtotal | | 14,000 | |
| 13% Programme Support Cost | 5600-00 | 1,820 | |
| Total | | 15,820 | |
| Organization of the Working Group Meetings on North-East Asian Subregional Cooperation on Nature Conservation (*) | | | US\$40,000 |
| Stop Gap Arrangement (**) | | | US\$35,000 |
| Production of Public Awareness Material | | | US\$6,000 |
| GRAND TOTAL | | | US\$96,820 |

(*) Finances permitting, two meeting with two participants from each NEASCEPC country.

(**) Estimated cost may be more or less.

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