

ESDD/NEASPEC/SOM (12)/4
22 March 2007

ENGLISH ONLY

**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

The Twelfth Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of NEASPEC

22-23 March 2007

Beijing, China

REVIEW OF PROGRAMME PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION
(Item 5(d) of the provisional agenda)

THE PREVENTION AND MITIGATION OF DUST AND SANDSTORM

Note by the Secretariat

1. The Secretariat presented a report to the 11th SOM about the preparation of activities to follow up the “Regional Master Plan for the Prevention and Control of Dust and Sandstorms in North-East Asia”, which was jointly conducted by ADB, UNCCD, UNESCAP and UNEP from early 2003 to March 2005. The project consisted of two major parts: 1) the establishment of the regional network for dust and sandstorm (DSS) monitoring and early warning; and 2) demonstration projects for the prevention and control of DSS.
2. The report particularly briefed about the two follow-up projects prepared by UNESCAP and ADB, respectively. UNESCAP in collaboration with UNEP prepared the proposal of a GEF project titled “Joint Demonstration Project for Preventing and Controlling Dust and Sandstorms Originated in Erlianhot (China) – Zamin Uud (Mongolia) Source Areas”. ADB also initiated a project titled “Support for Establishing a Regional Monitoring and Early Warning Network for Dust and Sandstorms in Northeast Asia”.
3. The proposal for “Joint Demonstration Project for Preventing and Controlling DSS” was developed by UNESCAP in consultation with the State Forestry Administration of China and the Ministry of Nature and Environment of Mongolia. The geographical focus of the project is the border area between Erlianhot (located in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region on the Chinese side) and Zamin Uud (on the Mongolian side), which is identified as one of the major DSS source areas and a potential site of demonstration projects in the Regional Master Plan.
4. The project particularly aims to:
 - Establish a re-vegetation programme in marginal and degraded land for stabilizing the movement of sands under strong winds; sustainable grassland management, including rehabilitation of degraded grassland; and community-based greening programme, especially at Zamin Uud, so as to prevent and control the development of DSS originated from these areas;
 - Establish an advanced plant nursery and plant propagation facility so as to facilitate the seedlings supply for the development of the demonstration sites within the project cycle and beyond, as well as for the rehabilitation of other marginal and degraded lands in the border region;
 - Build or strengthen human and institutional capacity in sustainable land management and integrated water resources management, including training and public awareness at community level;
 - Develop cooperative mechanism between the municipalities of Erlianhot and Zamin Uud in sustainable land management and integrated water resources management, including staff members exchange programme, sharing of experiences and lessons learned between the communities; and

- Promote and disseminate good practices on technical and policy measures including the promotion of appropriate indigenous and traditional knowledge.

5. Based on the formulated concept and approach, UNESCAP has consulted with UNEP regarding the application for Project Development Facility (PDF) fund to prepare a medium-sized GEF project. Since the Mongolian and Chinese GEF Operational Focal Points endorsed the PDF-A project proposal in September 2005 and March 2006, respectively, UNESCAP submitted to UNEP/GEF Coordination Office for a PDF grant of \$42,000 for the development of a medium-size project through meetings of national stakeholders' consultation and project steering committee.

6. However, the application was not preceded accordingly due to the uncertain situation during the GEF replenishment process, entailing the policy reformulation for GEF -4th cycle between 2006 and 2010. In addition, GEF indicated the introduction of a new process, the preparation of Project Identification Form (PIF), instead of the PDF. Furthermore, it was also indicated that UNEP would have different strategic areas in GEF projects, implying that UNEP will not carry out GEF projects on biodiversity and land degradation any more.

7. As a result, it became very clear that UNEP/GEF Coordination Office cannot proceed with the application of the PDF-A project and subsequently a Medium-size project. On the contrary, the new GEF process will be still uncertain until mid 2007 as GEF is currently in the process of finalizing its new policies. Thus, the development of a follow-up project will require a new series of consultations with potential implementing and executing agencies of GEF projects when the new arrangements of GEF-4 are in place.

.