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CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE NEASPEC ACTIVITIES

(Item 7(a) of the provisional agenda)

PROPOSAL FOR A PROJECT "NORTH-EAST ASIA ENVIRONMENTAL OUTLOOK"

Note by the Secretariat and UNEP

I. BACKGROUND AND MAIN TOPICS

1. The vision statement of NEASPEC, which was adopted at the sixth SOM in 2000, calls upon member countries to periodically review the environmental conditions and trends in the North-East Asian Subregion with a view to identifying additional priority areas for cooperation. In addition, the need to enhance the visibility of NEASPEC in the subregion has been widely perceived throughout Senior Officials Meetings.

2. Considering the request from Senior Officials Meeting as well as the necessity to uphold a sense of environmental community among policy makers, civil society and the private sector, UNEP and the Secretariat have developed a project concept on a publication titled "North-East Asia Environmental Outlook". This joint effort is drawn from the recognition of the clear synergy between the mandate and programme of UNEP on environmental assessment and desired roles of NEASPEC in addressing new environmental issues of subregional cooperation. Furthermore, this project concept is developed to support NEASPEC member countries in the implementation of the Green Growth Initiative, endorsed by the 5th Ministerial Conference on the Environment and Development in March 2005, with focus on the following questions:

(i) What are the current state/conditions and trends of environmental sustainability in North-East Asia?

(ii) Where do we stand in the evolution of new approaches in mainstreaming environmental dimensions into sustainable development processes?

(iii) How can we operationalize environmental sustainability in the context of the current trend of economic growth, and to create a win-win synergy between environmental sustainability and economic growth?

(iv) How has the environment been a key factor for human wellbeing and social development?

II. THE STRUCTURE OF THE OUTLOOK

3. The proposed North-East Asia Environment Outlook would have the following key sections:

- Policy maker's summary
- Introduction

  To overview the social, economic and environmental settings of the subregion, and the driving forces and pressures resulting from both human society and environmental change.
- State/trend of environment

To assess the state and trend of environment, with 1992 as the baseline, in the subregion and the impacts of the trend/changes on ecosystem services to human wellbeing and environmental integrity

- Development challenges and environmental outlook

  To analysis the interlinkages between environment and key development goals and targets set at international and national levels, and look into plausible future scenarios, notably

  (1) Poverty alleviation and food security

  (2) Human health and water services

  (3) Urbanization

  (4) Energy and technology

- Conclusions and cooperation options

  To highlight the conclusions and findings relating to policies on investment, technology, market based instruments that will stimulate green growth and enhance environmental sustainability in North-East Asia, and elaborate subregional cooperation options in this context.

4. A special POLICY MAKERS' SUMMARY will be elaborated for review and possible endorsement at the Thirteen Senior Officials Meeting in 2007. The proposed Policy Makers' Summary would respond to the following indicative list of key questions:

(i) How are various forms of natural and human-induced global and relevant subregional environmental change affecting our current well-being and opportunities for future economic growth and social development?

(ii) What are the key policy-relevant issues and findings relating to the interaction between society, economy and the environment where there is a need for further action?

(iii) What are the approached necessary to integrate environmental sustainability into economic development planning?

(iv) How far do environmental policies act as a driver for sustainable development, what are the most efficient and effective ways to implement them, what are the barriers and what are the corrective measures that could be taken?

III. METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS FOR PREPARING THE OUTLOOK

5. The methodology for preparing the Outlook will be based on the Integrated Environmental Assessment Methodology, which underpins the Global Environmental Outlook (GEO) process of UNEP. The Methodology employs an analytical approach focusing on the human-environment interaction as expressed through the Driving Force-Pressure-State (& Trend)-Impact-Response (DPSIR) framework (see Annex 1). It is an attempt to bring different ideas together into a coherent overarching analytical approach. The analytical approach is developed in recognition of

the fact that environmental challenges are highly complex and specific aspects may require much more sophisticated approaches than the one reflected here.

6. The preparation process will also take advantage of the GEO process, which is the practical implementation of UNEP's mandate to "keep the state of the global environment under review" (*UNGA Resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 1972)*. GEO is a consultative, participatory, capacity-building process for global environmental assessment and reporting on the state of the environment, trends and future outlook. The GEO process aims to facilitate the interaction between science and policy-making.

7. Thus, the proposed implementation module would be as follows:

(i) The implementation process would be facilitated by NEASPEC Secretariat (UNESCAP) and UNEP RRCAP(Regional Resource Center for Asia and the Pacific);

(ii) Each country will identify a collaborative centre or a small expert group to contribute to refining the methodology, drafting and reviewing the consecutive versions of the report, with the leading coordination role (see section 9 below) of Korea Environment Institute (KEI) of Republic of Korea, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) of Japan; National Institute of Environmental Studies (NIES) of Japan, and State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) of China;

(iii) Consecutive versions of the draft would also be sent to all the national NEASPEC focal points and UNEP's national focal points in each country for review;

(iv) Policy-Makers' Summary and the final draft of the report would be reviewed and endorsed at the next NEASPEC / SOM, with a joint launch by Heads of Delegates; and

(v) Guidance will also be sought from TEMM on the North-East Asia Environmental Outlook process, through the KEI, NIES and SEPA, as appropriate.

IV. EXPERTISE AND INSTITUTIONAL BASIS FOR THE OUTLOOK

8. The process will also harness special advantages and technical expertise available to develop North-East Asia Environmental Outlook:

(i) Analysis and insights developed through the State of Environment in Asia and the Pacific 2005 and previous reports, as well as relevant official national reports:

- Latest national development strategy/plan documents
- Series state of environment report (from 1992)
- Series national statistical reports (from 1992)
- Series annual report of Environment Ministry/Agency
- Latest Biodiversity country report (to CBD/CITES)
- National biosafety framework report
- Latest national report on Land degradation and desertification (to CCD)
- Non Annex country submission to UNFCCC (2003-4) provide additional information
- MDG national report

- Latest submission of CSD country report

(ii) Three active GEO Collaborating Centres (GEO CCs) in the subregion. Experts of the three GEO CCs are familiar with IEA methodology:

A. Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) of Japan;

B. National Institute of Environmental Studies (NIES) of Japan; and

C. State Environmental Protection Administration of China.

(iii) Expertise of UNEP obtained through its assistance to DPR Korea and Mongolia for the completion of national IEA/State of Environment report;

(iv) Existing technical centre of NEASPEC, namely North East Asian Centre for Environmental Data and Training (hosted by NIER, ROK); and

(v) Other partners, including Northwest Pacific Action Plan offices/centres, UNEP-Tongji Institute of Environment for Sustainable Development (China), UNEP-EPLCF Eco-Peace Leadership Centre (Republic of Korea), will also be invited to contribute to the drafting and reviewing processes, as appropriate.

9. Suggested leading institutions and responsibilities

Member states will arrange the following named institutions to take leading role in the development of North-East Asia Environmental Outlook:

(i) Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (Japan) to be responsible for "Introduction" chapter;

(ii) State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) of China to be responsible for "State/trend of Environment" chapter;

(iii) National Institute of Environmental Studies (NIES) of Japan to be responsible for "Development challenges and Environmental Outlook" chapter;

(iv) Korean Environment Institute of Republic of Korea to be responsible for "Conclusions and Cooperation options" chapter and Policy Maker's Summary; and

10. One person each from KEI, IGES, NIES, SEPA, and responsible staff members of UNESCAP and UNEP will be functioning as coordination group to oversee the development of the report, and to ensure the consistency and quality of the report.

V. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENT

11. The maximum cost of the project would be depended on the level of in-kind contribution made from member countries for the collection of data and information, and the preparation of drafts pertinent to national parts. While the indicative figure for the UNEP contribution would be US$40,000 primarily to cover the contributions of institutions and experts from developing countries, basic research and analysis, and development of draft report; co-funding of US$40,000 by NEASPEC Core Fund is expected to organizational costs of two experts meetings, and editing and printing.

<Table 1> Budget Plan for the Outlook

Sources of Fund	Budget Item	Year 1	Year 2	Total
UNEP	Grant/subcontract	30,000		30,000
	Meetings	10,000		10,000
	Subtotal	*40,000*		*40,000*
NEASPEC CORE FUND	Meetings	30,000		30,000
	Editing and printing		10,000	10,000
	Subtotal	30,000	10,000	40,000
Total		***70,000***	***10,000***	***80,000***

VI. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

12. The Meeting may wish to adopt the proposed activity as a new project for NEASPEC, and request the Secretariat, in cooperation with UNEP, to undertake the project.

13. The Meeting may wish to approve the disbursement of the Core Fund to meet the financial requirement for the proposed project activity.

14. The Meeting may wish to call for active participation of relevant research institutions in all member countries in the proposed project activity, including the provision of in-kind contribution in the context of information collection and the preparation of drafts pertinent to the national parts of the Outlook.

ANNEX 1

The Concept of DPSIR

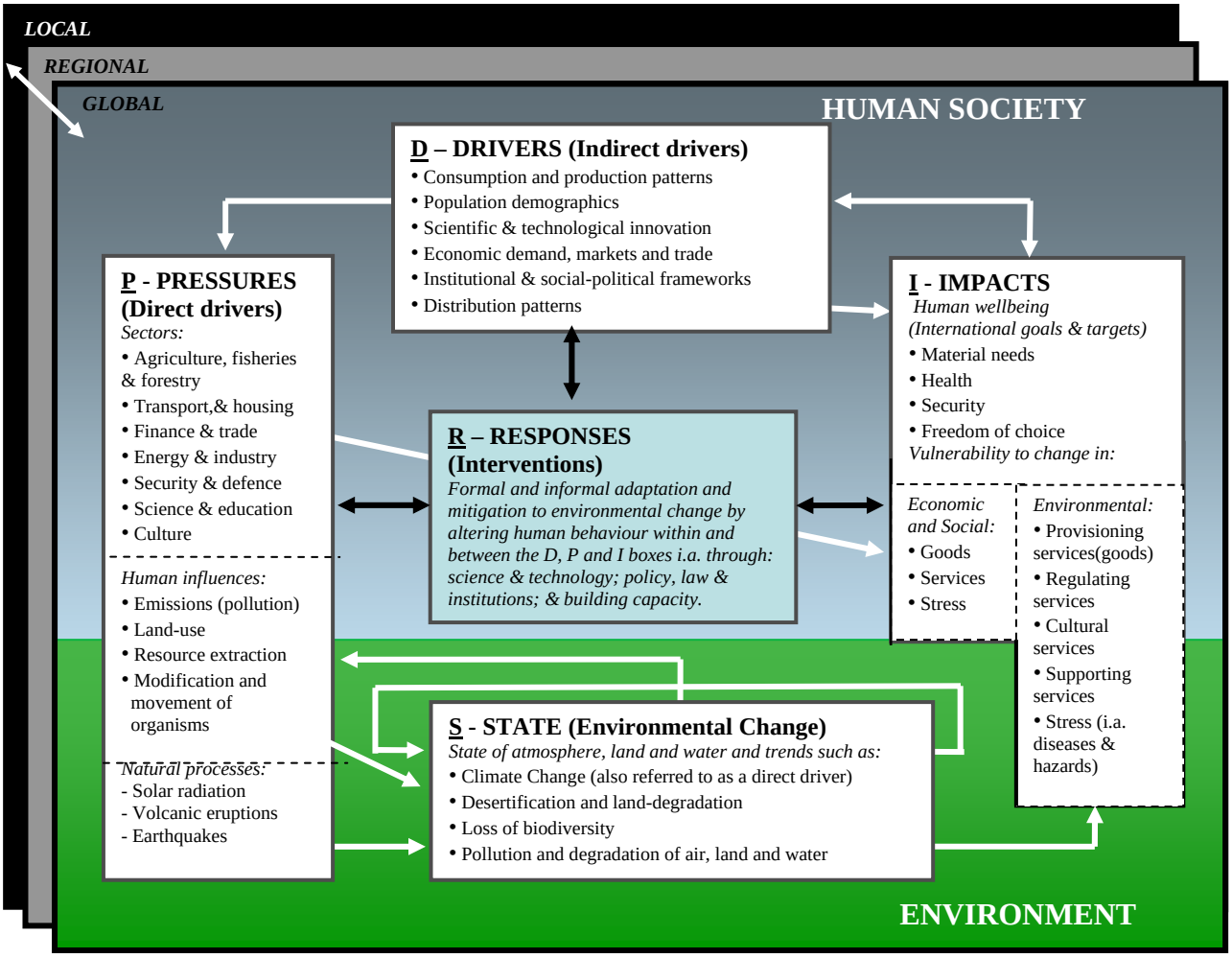

Figure 1. The UNEP Human-Environment Interaction analytical approach is built on the Driver, Pressure, State, Impact and Response (DPSIR) framework, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) Conceptual Framework and vulnerability considerations. It is multi-scalable and indicates generic cause-and-effect relations within and among:

• DRIVERS: They are sometimes referred to as indirect or underlying drivers or driving forces and refer to fundamental processes in society, which drives activities having a direct impact on the environment.

• PRESSURES: They are sometimes referred to as direct drivers as in the MA framework. They include, in this case, the social and economic sectors of society (also sometimes considered as Drivers). Human interventions may be directed towards causing a desired environmental change and may be subject to feedbacks in terms of environmental change, or could be an intentional or un-intentional by-products of other human activities (i.e. pollution).

• STATE: Environmental state also include trends, often referred to as environmental change, which could be both natural and human induced. One form of change, such as climate change, (referred to as a direct driver in the MA framework) may lead to other forms of change such as biodiversity loss (a secondary effect of climate gas emissions). Multiple pressures could leave the environment more vulnerable, leading to cumulative change and, in some cases, sudden and disruptive change.

- IMPACTS: Environmental change may positively or negatively influence human well-being (as reflected in international goals and targets) through changes in ecological services and environmental stress. Impacts may be environmental, social and economic, contributing to the vulnerability of people. Vulnerability to change varies between groups of people depending on their geographic, economic and social location, exposure to change and capacity to mitigate or adapt to change human well-being, vulnerability and coping capacity are dependent on access to social and economic goods-and-services and exposure to social and economic stress.

- RESPONSES: They (interventions in the MA Framework) consist of elements among the drivers, pressures and impacts which may be used for managing society in order to alter the human-environment interactions. Drivers, pressures and impacts that can be altered by a decision maker at a given scale is referred to as *endogenous* factors, while those that can't, are referred to as *exogenous* factors. Responses are at different levels, for example, environmental laws and institutions at national level, and multilateral environmental agreements and institutions at regional and international levels. Responses address issues of vulnerability of both people and the environment, and provide opportunities for enhancing human well-being.