

NEASPEC Commemorative Statement

on Promoting Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia

1. We, the member States of the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC),
2. Having met in Seoul from 23 to 24 November 2023 in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of NEASPEC, which was established in 1993 in Seoul, Republic of Korea,
3. Recalling the NEASPEC Framework, adopted at the third Senior Officials Meeting (SOM-3) in 1996, defining the goal of the framework as a means to promote subregional environmental cooperation and sustainable development efforts, has enhanced capacities of the member States in environmental management efforts, and has facilitated step-by-step and practical approaches that could be used as building blocks for strengthening subregional cooperation,
4. Noting the Vision Statement for Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia, adopted at the SOM-6 in 2000, recommending a periodical review of the environmental conditions and trends as well as the implementation of priority projects in North-East Asia, has promoted common policy dialogues on approaches, views and coordinated actions on subregional environmental issues and developed the NEASPEC into a comprehensive programme,
5. Acknowledging that NEASPEC has made significant and tangible progress in subregional environmental cooperation in programmatic areas, namely air pollution, biodiversity and nature conservation, marine protected areas, low carbon cities, and desertification and land degradation, and the establishment of thematic platforms, namely the North-East Asia Clean Air Partnership (NEACAP), North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN), and North-East Asia Low Carbon Cities Platform (NEA-LCCP) making NEASPEC a unique environmental cooperation mechanism in North-East Asia, that is tailored to the specific subregional characteristics and needs of the member States for concerted efforts to improve environmental sustainability,
6. Recognizing that human beings are at the center of concerns for sustainable development, and they are entitled to healthy and productive life in harmony with nature, and subregional and regional environmental issues should be effectively addressed through concerted and joint efforts of all the member States concerned,
7. Considering the need to address ongoing large-scale environmental challenges prevalent in the subregion, to enhance NEASPEC's contribution to global environmental benefits in a timely and effective manner, and to explore new areas of cooperation,
8. Reaffirming commitments of the member States to global goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), goals and objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement, and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the need and benefit

of subregional cooperation through NEASPEC considering its thematic interlinkages and collaboration with other relevant global, regional and sub-regional mechanisms, platforms and initiatives,

9. Taking note of the need for reducing disparities in the capacity of the member States to address domestic and regional environmental challenges and improve the environmental sustainability in the region,
10. Remaining committed to the original aspiration of NEASPEC, maintaining the intergovernmental process and emphasizing the role of the member States in decision-making and policy guidance on the subregional cooperation, making holistic and systemic efforts to enhance co-benefits of environment and economic development, and meeting our expectations for a clean and beautiful world and sustainable development,
11. We, the member States of NEASPEC, envision:
 - a. **Accelerating the progress of NEASPEC's activities, projects and platforms in five programmatic areas** by optimizing its operation of coordination and decision-making processes, developing joint actions, promoting science-policy linkages, utilizing innovative tools and resources of implementation, and enhancing monitoring and evaluation of programme implementation,
 - b. **Bolstering NEASPEC's relevance to tackling environmental challenges and delivering concrete benefits for the subregion and beyond**, by aligning its work with national, regional and global goals and priorities, strengthening its ties with partners and stakeholders, and identifying new areas of collaboration that can be effectively addressed by NEASPEC,
 - c. **Developing subregional knowledge base and capacity through NEASPEC's works for the member States** by promoting policy dialogue and provision of technical support, exchanging knowledge, information, experiences and good practices, and interacting and cooperating with various stakeholders in the subregion and beyond, and
 - d. **Enhancing the effectiveness of NEASPEC's work** by strengthening practical project cooperation, making the best use of existing resources, enhancing the Senior Officials Meetings (SOM) mechanism, encouraging voluntary contributions of the member States to NEASPEC, and strengthening linkages and coordination with other relevant national, regional and global initiatives.