



**Inception Meeting for NEASPEC Project on Implementing the Regional
Master Plan for the Prevention and Control of Dust and Sandstorms in
North-East Asia**

19-21 April 2011, Ulaanbaatar and Zamyn-Uud, Mongolia

CONCEPT PAPER

I. Background

The Inception Meeting will be jointly organized by ESCAP Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia (SRO-ENEA) and the Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism of Mongolia in order to discuss the details of the NEASPEC project on prevention of dust and sandstorms in North-East Asian subregion and facilitate in-depth exchange of knowledge and experience primarily between Chinese and Mongolian national experts on combating desertification.

Realizing that the increasing rate of desertification and more frequent occurrence of dust and storms present an alarming challenge to the subregion, the NEASPEC member States decided to embark on a project to facilitate cooperation among member States for the prevention of dust and sandstorms at their point of origin during 14th Senior Officials Meeting (SOM-14, April 2009, Moscow) and subsequently approved a detailed project document during SOM-15 in Tokyo in March 2010.

The current NEASPEC project was developed as a follow-up to the Regional Master Plan for the Prevention and Control of Dust and Sandstorms (DSS) in North-East Asia which was jointly developed in 2005 by the Asia Development Bank (ADB), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and adopted by the Governments of China, Mongolia, Republic of Korea and Japan to address DSS in a comprehensive manner through prevention and monitoring at the subregional scale.

Among various planned activities, the project focuses on the development and implementation of a pilot project on prevention of DSS in Zamyn-Uud, Mongolia, bordering Erinhote, China. This location was selected among the pilot areas identified by the member States in the Regional Master Plan as it could provide the best platform for

transboundary cooperation between China and Mongolia on DSS through sharing policy and technical experiences. In this regard, a training program for Mongolian experts will be conducted in China in mid 2011 in order to share the knowledge and experiences of successful practices of China in combating desertification. This training is also expected to provide both Chinese and Mongolian experts with an opportunity for building a new bilateral network of collaboration.

In this connection, the Inception Meeting is expected to provide practical technical advice on the design and implementation of the pilot project on prevention of DSS in Zamyn-Uud and on the elaboration of the training module for Mongolian experts.

II. Organization of the meeting

The Inception meeting will comprise three parts as follows: (1) expert group discussions on 19 April in the premises of the Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism of Mongolia in Ulaanbaatar; (2) study tour to a location of a project on combating desertification near Ulaanbaatar on 20 April; (3) visit to a planned pilot project location in Zamyn-Uud, Mongolia on 21 April. The participants will depart from Ulaanbaatar to Zamyn-Uud by train on the evening of 20 April and will arrive to Zamyn-Uud on the morning of 21 April.

All participants are expected to attend parts (1) and (2) of the meeting. However, participation in the field trip to Zamyn-Uud is voluntary as this trip is primarily intended for technical experts from China and Mongolia.

The detailed programme of the event and the information note for the participants will be distributed by the secretariat in due time.

Objectives of the Inception Meeting

- Review objectives and modalities of implementation of the NEASPEC DSS project to provide advice and recommendations for more effective achievement of the project results;
- Review existing experience in North-East Asia on prevention of DSS and facilitate exchange of experience and knowledge, especially between Chinese and Mongolian national participants;
- Facilitate dialogue among wide stakeholder groups including national experts, local governments, Civil Society Organizations, UN agencies and other development partners working on combating desertification in Mongolia;

- Provide practical technical advice to local government and project implementer on the design and execution of the pilot project in Zamyn-Uud during the field trip to this area. Specifically provide suggestions on planting of the natural wind-break and installation of the irrigation system;
- Provide inputs and recommendations on planning and implementation of the training program for the Mongolian experts in China with specific suggestions on elaboration of the training modules on policy issues and technical aspects of combating desertification.

Organizers

- ESCAP SRO-ENEA (NEASPEC secretariat), Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism of Mongolia and Mongolian National Committee to Combat Desertification.

Expected Participants

- Experts from national ministries, research institutes and academia, representatives of local governments (Zamyn-Uud and Erinhot) from Mongolia and China and/or provincial governments (Dornogobi aymag of Mongolia and Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region of China), local and international CSOs, UN agencies and other development partners based in Mongolia and involved in activities on combating desertification.