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

**REPORT OF  
THE THIRTEENTH SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING OF NEASPEC**

**Ulaanbaatar, 20-21 March 2008**

## I. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Meeting exchanged updated information on the member countries' national action towards environmental protection and sustainable development and their implications for North-east Asian subregional cooperation. Member countries gave views on the need to revitalize NEASPEC by developing new programme areas, enhancing ownership of the member countries, and making effective institutional arrangements.
2. The Meeting welcomed the preliminary exchanges between the Russian Federation and the Secretariat of the development of a project on biodiversity conservation in North-east Asia, as a follow-up to the NEASPEC Resolution and Nature Conservation Strategy, for which the possibility of financial support is being considered by the Russian Federation. The Meeting recommended a full consultative process for further development of this project profile so that the project will be a full NEASPEC project with comprehensive participation by NEASPEC member countries.
3. The Meeting expressed its anticipation for early start of the implementation of the ADB RETA project on the Mitigation of Transboundary Air Pollution from Coal-fired Power Plants. The Meeting acknowledged the willingness to participate in the project, expressed by the Republic of Korea, China, Japan, Mongolia and the Russian Federation. In this context, member countries requested the Secretariat to take practical steps to ensure appropriate financial arrangement for the participation of the Russian Federation and DPRK in line with UN rules and regulations.
4. The Meeting reaffirmed that the adoption of the Eco-Efficiency Partnership is a pending issue, subject to further discussion on the detailed activity plan for the Partnership. The Meeting requested the Secretariat again to develop an activity plan before the next SOM so that the views of the member countries are appropriately reflected.
5. The Meeting reviewed the Mongolian proposal of a demonstration project for Dust and Sandstorm Monitoring and Assessment Capabilities in Source Areas, and accepted the proposal in principle. In requesting the Secretariat to further develop a detailed project document in collaboration with the Government of Mongolia, the Meeting recommended to strengthen coordination with other ongoing initiatives on the relevant subject, including,

in particular, a TEMM project on DSS, and to focus on source area management. The Meeting also expressed its view that the revised project proposal should ensure full participation of NEASPEC member countries.

6. The Meeting received a concept paper of the project on Programme on Public Awareness and Participation by the Republic of Korea, which will be submitted as an official proposal to the 14<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting.

7. The Meeting reviewed and accepted in principle, the recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting held on 20 March, covering the issues of (a) NEASPEC and NEA Environmental Cooperation, and (b) new arrangement of the NEASPEC Secretariat.

- a) The Government of Mongolia informed the Meeting of its initiative to hold a North-East Asian subregional summit on climate change, for which informal consultation process will be started shortly with full consultation with NEASPEC member countries.
- b) The Meeting took note of the presentation made by the ROK during EGM, on its offer to host the permanent secretariat of the NEASPEC. The Meeting decided to postpone the decision for the 14th SOM Taking into account the ongoing process of negotiations on the initiative of the UN Secretary General to establish five subregional offices of UNESCAP and in particular one for the North-east Asian countries, as well as the process of the reform of the conference structure of the Commission.
- c) The Meeting positively considered the possibility of having special events such as Northeast Asian Environmental Cooperation Week, in which NEASPEC members are invited to actively participate. The Meeting recommended that the ROK, as a host of the TEMM in 2008, to explore such possibilities.

8. The Meeting reviewed the report on the NEASPEC Core Fund 2006-2007, and budget planning for 2008-2009. The Meeting accepted the report as well as the budget planning. The Meeting expressed its appreciation to the Secretariat for efficient use of financial resources. The Meeting also expressed appreciation for the announcement by

China for its contribution of USD 50,000 to the Core Fund in 2008. Noting the discussion on the disbursement of the Core Fund for the Air Pollution Project, the Meeting requested the Secretariat to clarify the terms of use and operation practices of the Core Fund in consultation with appropriate offices of the UN and submit the information to the 14<sup>th</sup> SOM.

9. The Meeting welcomed the indication by the Russian Federation to host the 14<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting of NEASPEC. The venue and exact dates will be decided through further consultations and announced in due course.

10. The Meeting expressed sincere gratitude to the Government of Mongolia for generously hosting the Meeting and for its warm hospitality and excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.

## **II. PROCEEDINGS OF THE 13<sup>th</sup> SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING**

1. An Expert Group Meeting and the 13<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting of NEASPEC were held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia on 20-21 March 2008. It was organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and generously hosted by the Government of Mongolia.

### **A. Attendance**

2. The Meeting was attended by representatives of China, Japan, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation. It was also attended by representatives from Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

### **B. Opening session**

3. The SOM was opened by Mr. Masakazu Ichimura, Chief of Environment Section, Environment and Sustainable Development Division of UNESCAP. At the outset, Mr. Ichimura expressed his sincere appreciation to the Government of Mongolia for generously hosting this important meeting and excellent arrangements, and welcomed delegates and

experts from the member countries. He highlighted that the year 2008 commemorates the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NEASPEC by noting key momentums including the third SOM in Ulaanbaatar in 1996, which adopted the framework of NEASPEC. In this regard, he emphasized the need to make further progress in the institutional mechanism, and thus urged the member countries to build another stepping-stone at this meeting.

4. A welcoming address to the participants was delivered by H.E. Mr. Davaadorjiin Delgertsogt, Vice Minister of Nature and Environment, Mongolia. After extending his gratitude to all delegates, he underscored the need for more comprehensive cooperation with sufficient financial capacity to tackle environmental challenges in North-East Asia. The Vice Minister noted the significance of joint activities of NEASPEC on dust and sandstorms, and air pollution from coal-fired power plants in reducing the adverse impacts of human activities on subregional environment.

#### **C. Election of officers**

5. Mr. Damdin Dagvadorj, Director, Information, Monitoring and Assessment Division, Ministry of Nature and Environment, Mongolia, was elected as the Chairperson of the Meeting. Mr. Chia Wenrui, Counsellor, the Embassy of China in Mongolia was elected as the Vice-Chairperson. And Ms. Ogawa Masako, Deputy Director, Environmental Cooperation Office, Ministry of Environment, Japan was elected as the Rapporteur.

#### **D. Adoption of the agenda**

6. The Meeting adopted the following agenda:
1. Opening of the meeting
  2. Election of officers
  3. Adoption of agenda
  4. Environment and development policies and issues of NEASPEC (statements by the delegations from member countries and international organizations)
  5. Review of programme planning and implementation
    - a) The Project on the Framework for a Nature Conservation Programme in North-East Asia.

- b) Regional Technical Assistance: Mitigation of Transboundary Air Pollution from Coal-Fired Power Plants in North-East Asia.
  - c) Eco-efficiency Partnership in North-East Asia
6. Consideration of new NEASPEC project proposals (submitted by member countries)
  7. Consideration of future NEASPEC institutional mechanism (Conclusions and Recommendations from the Expert Group Meeting)
  8. Review and Planning of the Core Fund
  9. Venue, date and provisional agenda of the Thirteenth SOM
  10. Other matters
  11. Adoption of the meeting report.

**E. Environment and development policies and issues of the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC)**

*(Item 4 of the agenda)*

7. The representative of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Choi Jaechul, firstly noted that NEASPEC has made remarkable progress through the active participation and contribution of member countries although NEASPEC has gone through ups and downs. The representative particularly suggested member countries to claim ownership over developing cooperation strategies in order to revitalize NEASPEC. In light of this anticipation, the representative emphasized the need to establish a NEASPEC Programme Secretariat and as the first step agree upon the timing for establishing the Programme Secretariat during this SOM.

8. Mr. Chai, the representative of China stated that NEASPEC has achieved positive results. Practical cooperation conducted within NEASPEC on programs to reduce coal-fired power plant pollution, control and prevent dust and sandstorms, and improve eco-efficiency have made positive progress and brought real benefits to countries in the subregion. In particular, the representative emphasized the need for securing more financial resources and prioritizing the implementation of NEASPEC projects, including the project on air pollution from coal-fired power plants, Eco-efficiency Partnership, etc.

9. Ms. Masako Ogawa, the representative of Japan introduced Japan's strategy for building a sustainable society, which is based on the three conceptual and policy frameworks, i.e. a low carbon society, sound material-cycle society, and society in harmony with nature. The representative particularly elaborated the strategy in the context of the Japanese Government's plan to make the country a leading environmental nation by creating and presenting a Japanese model of sustainable society. In this regard, the representative highlighted the Government's plan for accelerating actions towards the national target under the Kyoto Protocol and in particular the policy of "Cool Earth 50".

10. Ms. Natalia Vavilova, Leading Adviser, Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Natural Resources of the Russian Federation introduced the Russian government's policy on environmental protection and sustainable development and presented recommendations on the future activity of NEASPEC. In particular, the representative elaborated the policy on "efficient nature management", aiming to secure the stability of ecosystems and build an environmentally-oriented economy, and the legal and policy frameworks for reducing energy consumption per unit of GDP by 50% by 2020 year in comparison with 2000 year. With regard to NEASPEC activities, the representative indicated a possibility of financial support of the Government for follow-up activities to the Nature Conservation Strategy and underlined the need of full participation of NEASPEC member countries in the project on air pollution from coal-fired power plants and the proposed activity on dust and sandstorms.

## **F. Presentations and Discussions on Substantive Agenda Items**

### *(Item 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the agenda)*

11. The Meeting had presentations from the Secretariat on Agenda Item (5) "Review of programme planning and implementation"; Agenda Item (6) "Consideration of new NEASPEC project proposals"; Agenda Item (7) "Consideration of future NEASPEC institutional mechanism"; and Agenda Item (8) "Review and planning of the Core Fund". The Meeting subsequently had considerable discussions after presentations on each topic in the Agenda Items. The key outcomes of the presentation and discussion are included in the conclusion of the Meeting.

12. The Meeting received a brief summary of the Expert Group Meeting (EGM), which was held in the morning of 22<sup>nd</sup> March to discuss the new institutional mechanism of NEASPEC. The result of the discussion is included in the conclusion of the Meeting.

**G. Venue, date and provisional agenda of the Fourteenth SOM**

*(Agenda Item 9)*

13. The Meeting discussed the venue, date and agenda of the 14<sup>th</sup> SOM. The Meeting expressed its appreciation to the Government of the Russian Federation for generously offering to host the next Meeting. The proposed dates and venue will be announced by the host government in due course.

**H. Other Matters**

*(Item 10 of the agenda)*

14. The Government of the Republic of Korea presented an informal paper on public awareness and participation, a NEASPEC action in support of the Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration and Aarhus Convention, and expressed its intention to submit an official proposal to the 14<sup>th</sup> SOM.

15. The Meeting expressed its deep appreciation to the Government of Mongolia for generously hosting the 13<sup>th</sup> SOM and for its warm hospitality and the excellent arrangements made for the Meetings.

**I. Adoption of the Report**

*(Item 11 of the agenda)*

16. The Meeting adopted the conclusion of the Meeting on 22 March 2006. The report of the Meeting was finalized by the Secretariat after the SOM.

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