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Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

REVIEW OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION
(Item 5 (c) of the provisional agenda)

Eco-efficiency Partnership in North-East Asia

Note by the secretariat

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Annex: Eco-efficiency: A Practical Path to Sustainable Development

I. Overview of Progress

1. In pursuit of practical actions for achieving sustainable development, the 12th SOM adopted a decision to launch the Eco-efficiency Partnership in North-East Asia, which aimed at (a) creating a common view and knowledge among major stakeholders, (b) facilitating the creation of subregional common policies, (c) assisting in strengthening national capacity and (d) raising public awareness.

2. The 12th SOM also agreed upon a preliminary plan on joint activities, which would include (a) publishing reports on eco-efficiency to disseminate information and raise awareness, (b) facilitating dialogues among key stakeholders, i.e. government officials, national experts, business organizations and civil society and (c) organizing training programmes.

3. In this regard, the Secretariat recently published a guidebook "Eco-efficiency: A Practical Path to Sustainable Development", which is submitted to this meeting. The publication aims to provide major stakeholders with information about eco-efficiency concept and guide further discussions and actions. In particular, the publication draws the overall direction of national and subregional actions for the application of eco-efficiency concept to macro-level and economy-wide as such work is still at the very early stage.

4. In view of the need to develop a detailed plan of the Partnership, the 12th SOM noted the following actions to undertake during the period 2007-2008.

- Identify key themes and areas of subregional cooperation;
- Develop the overall framework and activity plan of the Partnership; and
- Undertake one or two preliminary activities based on the identified areas.

5. The Secretariat will carry out the proposed activities in consultation with the national focal points of NEASPEC and national institutions of the member countries. The proposed activities could be developed with a view of the following considerations: the potential of eco-efficiency concept to be practical tool for various levels of responses to decoupling environmental impacts from economic activities; and the need to integrate climate action into national development plans under the Bali Action Plan. Thus, the activities may focus on developing a conceptual linkage between eco-efficiency and low-carbon society, and facilitating policy forums to discuss relevant policy measures.

6. Therefore, the Secretariat proposes organizing a policy forum in the second half of 2008. The meeting may discuss a number of identified policy measures that have significant potentials to contribute to building a low-carbon society through improving economy-wide eco-efficiency, and develop a concrete framework and activity plan of the Eco-efficiency Partnership.

7. Furthermore, the Secretariat will make the best use of Eco-efficiency Indicators which are currently being developed by ESCAP to measure the environmental implications of economic performance in Asia and the Pacific. The Eco-efficiency Indicators could be used as an instrument for guiding the goal and direction of the Eco-efficiency Partnership.

II. Issues for Consideration

8. The Meeting may wish to provide guidance on the direction and potential activities of the Partnership.
9. The Meeting may receive suggestions from member countries regarding the proposed policy forum.
