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REVIEW OF PROGRAMME PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

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Eco-efficiency Partnership

Note by the Secretariat

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Annex: North-East Asian Cities: Moving Towards Low Carbon, Green Cities

I. OVERVIEW OF ECO-EFFICIENCY PARTNERSHIP

1. Since 2005, NEASPEC has held a series of expert group meetings and reviews by Senior Officials Meetings (SOM) on the issues related to economy-wide eco-efficiency improvement in North-East Asia. As a result of consultations, the SOM-14 received support from member States on a draft activity plan on “Eco-efficiency Partnership”, which consists of three major components, i.e. Eco-Tax Reform Partnership, Public-Private-Civil Society Partnership, and Urban Governance Partnership. The plan also proposed that activities under the thematic areas 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.
2. In this connection, the SOM-15 and SOM-16 requested the Secretariat to develop knowledge sharing activities in close consultation with member States, and invited the member States to recommend national institutions which could jointly develop and implement activities of Eco-efficiency Partnership.

II. ACTIVITIES IN 2011-2012

A. Private Sector - Civil Society Partnership focusing on knowledge sharing in the field of eco-labeling

3. Upon the request by the Mongolian Government, the Capacity Building Training for Mongolian Experts in Eco-labeling was jointly organized by ESCAP, the Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism of Mongolia (MONET), Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MNCCI) on 1-3 May 2012 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, bringing together experts from China, Japan, Republic of Korea and Russian Federation. The training was aimed to (1) raise awareness of Mongolian officials and experts on the overall framework of eco-labeling programme in China, Japan, Republic of Korea and Russian Federation, (2) review eco-labeling initiatives in Mongolia, and (3) identify potential areas of collaboration on eco-labeling programme.
4. The training focused on the review of national process of Type I eco-label, of which environmental performance is certified by a third party based on multiple criteria. The Type I eco-labels have been operated by 48 countries in the world. Among NEASPEC member States, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea have made the eco-labeling programme as a key avenue for public participation in promoting sustainable consumption and as a major tool for greening products and technology. Key progress in Type I eco-labels in member States shared at the training was as follows:

- China: Started in 1993, the programme currently includes 91 product categories with 21,000 products and more than 4,000 enterprises. The output value of certified enterprises is more than CNY90 billion.
- Japan: Started in 1977, the programme currently includes 51 product categories and 5,118 products with 1,701 companies.
- Republic of Korea: Started in 1992, the programme includes 149 products and 2 service criteria with 7,777 products. The number of certified products has rapidly increased since 2005 by enacting the “Act on the Promotion of the Purchase of Environment-Friendly Products”, which resulted in the increase of certified products from 757 in 2003 to 2721 products in 2005.
- Russian Federation: While there is no eco-labeling programme at the government level, a Type I programme, Vitality Leaf, has been operated since 2001 by a non-profit organization, Ecological Union. The number of certified products/services under this programme is 38 with 10 companies.
- Mongolia: The Government has started a Type I programme, which currently consists of only two products. In addition, “Made in Organic Mongolia” label was initiated by Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MNCCI) and being awarded to 16 products of natural origin.

5. The training shared specific national scheme, products category, criteria, and certification procedures. The training also discussed potential areas of international cooperation and capacity building for Mongolia. The discussions identified that priority areas for the development and expansion of Mongolian eco-labeling programme would include (a) construction materials to minimize environmental (in particular, water resources) and health impacts from the rapid expansion of new residential buildings, and (b) electric and electronic goods to promote the import of more eco-efficient goods.

6. After the training, participants took part in a survey conducted by the secretariat. While most respondents expressed their satisfaction with the training, specific views were expressed with regard to its contribution to (a) improving modality and procedure of “Made in Organic Mongolia”, (b) improving standards of eco-labeling in wool and cashmere products; (c) promoting green and organic products on news media, and (d) making new laws and regulations on green products.

B. Urban Governance Partnership with a focus on low carbon, green cities

7. The Conference on Low Carbon, Green Cities in North-East Asia was jointly organized by Suwon City in the Republic of Korea and UNESCAP Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia (SRO-ENEAS) on 17-18 November 2011 in Suwon, Republic of

Korea. The Conference was attended by experts from research institutions, cities and NGOs in North-East Asia, and held to discuss the technical measures and policy instruments and strategies for developing low carbon, green cities in North-East Asia; reviewing the existing and planned initiatives for low carbon city development and identifying good practices in North-East Asia; and building a partnership among North-East Asian cities for developing and implementing eco-efficiency approach at the local level.

8. The Conference noted significant progress in the formulation of national initiatives in support of cities' action towards low carbon, green cities in North-East Asia. For example, the Chinese government has initiated several pilot and demonstration programmes including Low Carbon Pilot Provinces and Cities by National Development and Reform Committee (NDRC), Pilot Low-carbon Transport System by Ministry of Transportation, Comprehensive Demonstration on Financial Policies of Energy-saving and Pollution Reduction by NDRC and Ministry of Finance. In particular, the government designated five low carbon provinces and eight low carbon cities in August 2010.

9. For the case of Japan, the revision of Act on Promotion of Global Warming Countermeasures in 2008 mandated prefectural and large-size municipal governments to incorporate policies that reflect area-wide natural and social conditions into the current "action plans of local governments". As a result, 94 percent of the cities, which are designated by the Act, have set their action plan and 71 percent of all cities (1,750) have implemented the same as of 2010. Furthermore, the Cabinet Secretariat disseminated innovative approaches and provided comprehensive support through eco-model city programme and designated special zone; the Ministry of Environment formulated basic policy for promoting low carbon cities in Japan; Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications promoted the decentralized, independent and locally produced/consumed clean energy; Ministry of Land, Infrastructures, Transport and Tourism coordinated urban planning, transportation and logistic policies for low carbon city development; Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry introduced new energy in cities and promoted energy efficiency at the city level.

10. The Government of the Republic of Korea in 2007 designated 8 cities as model cities for responding to climate change and in 2009 launched the concept of EcoRich city for supporting green growth of cities. Furthermore, the Low Carbon, Green Growth Basic Act in January 2010 requires local governments to set the energy saving target and target of greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions reduction.

11. In that context, the Conference noted various ongoing initiatives of cities for low carbon, green cities. Such initiatives commonly encompass the areas of sustainable land use, green transportation system, resource recycling, energy efficiency, green space plan, etc. Notable examples include:

- Suwon city in the Republic of Korea adopted the plan for establishing low-carbon social structures of green city, green transportation system, renewable energy and green industrialization in order to reduce GHG emissions by 40 percent by 2030 from the level in 2005.
- Guangdong Province in China prepared its Low-Carbon Development Policy Roadmap which consists of four major areas including regulatory policy, economic policy, market mechanisms and other incentives with specific quantified targets for each area.
- Kitakyushu city in Japan launched the green frontier plan which targets to build a society with accumulated prosperity over generations through reducing CO2 emissions by 40 percent by 2050. This plan focuses on establishing low carbon industrial clusters, developing learning system, and enhancing low carbon social development.
- Guangzhou city in China prepared a scenario that suggests the potential of reducing GHG emissions by 46 percent from BAU between 2005 and 2030 with low carbon policies focusing on convenient transport, green building, fuel switch, industry decarbonation and low carbon electricity, in order to decouple economic growth from environmental impacts.
- Changwon City in the Republic of Korea has implemented a ubiquitous technology-based public bicycle-loaning system, named “Nearby Useful Bike, Interesting Joyful Attraction (NUBIJA)” with 4,500 bicycles and 110,000 members since 2008.
- Iida City in Japan has introduced Cooperative Solar Power Generation Project, in which the local government loans the roofs of public buildings for free while a private energy company installs solar panels on those roofs and supplies electricity to the building users. One of the key aspects of this project is the utilization of citizens’ fund for the panel installation.

12. The Conference noted the need to further accelerate the development and deployment of policies and programmes for low carbon, green cities in North-East Asia and ideas for establishing a subregional partnership for low carbon, green cities. The major roles of such partnership could include promoting transfer of low carbon development technique, training experts in low-carbon technique, facilitating joint research on methodology, sharing information of policies and successful practices, etc. In this regard, the Conference proposed NEASPEC to act as a locus of information platform for collecting, analyzing and distributing strategies and plans for low carbon, green cities in North-East Asia, and as a catalyst for capacity development programmes among cities.

13. The Conference also noted the significance of leading cities in the development of policies and techniques for low carbon, green cities and their contributions to inter-city

cooperation as a source of innovative knowledge. In this connection, the Conference called for those cities including Suwon, Kitakyushu and other Eco-Model Cities in Japan to take initiatives for launching a new partnership for low carbon, green cities in this subregion.

III. KNOWLEDGE SHARING ON LOW CARBON CITY STRATEGIES

14. Following the Suwon Conference which requested SRO-ENEA/NEASPEC to act as a locus of information platform for collecting, analyzing and distributing strategies and plans for low carbon, green cities, the Secretariat has been compiling low carbon city strategies from cities in member States.

15. The compiled information contains projects that are in plan, in process, and completed. The strategies that make a city 'low-carbon' are diverse; hence, the database includes seven sectors in which the strategies can be identified: 1) Low Carbon, 2) Energy, 3) Transportation, 4) Building, 5) Industry, 6) Green Space, and 7) Urban Infrastructure. Each of the seven sectors in their own ways contributes to increasing energy efficiency or reducing the environmental impact of a city, thereby lessening the city's carbon footprint.

16. As of October 2012, the compiled strategies include 26 Chinese cities, 14 Japanese cities, 13 Korean cities, 1 Mongolian city, and 1 Russian city. The list of cities is created from a collection of various sources. First, a central-government mandate or programme (such as Eco Model City Project of Japan and Low Carbon Green City Pilot City of Korea) often designates a number of cities to participate in low carbon initiatives. Second, conferences and networks among local authorities also help to identify the cities that have independently launched goals and strategies. International organizations such as the World Bank and UN Habitat, which partner with local authorities to implement low-carbon urban projects, serve as reference points as well.

17. Among the 55 cities listed thus far, 33 cities have readily available information. Moreover, 23 cities out of the 33 have explicitly specified a carbon reduction target. For the cities without much publicly available detail on their low-carbon projects, the NEASPEC Secretariat is sending official requests to the local authorities for thorough information.

18. The following provides a brief overview of the existing data:

- The implementation periods for most projects extend to 2020, except for the 9 Japanese cities under the Eco-Model City Project, whose plans extend to 2050.
- The most frequently explored urban strategy sector - undertaken by at least 11 cities - is the energy sector, which includes switching energy sources and implementing waste-to-energy facilities.

- Next, at least seven cities have devised plans to heighten the quality of life by expanding green space and optimizing urban infrastructure to accommodate environmentally-friendly lifestyle.
- Also notable is that at least six cities plan to remap their industrial structure, striving to cast a new economic strategy towards a low-carbon city. A significant number of cities also proposed establishing a full GHG inventory, which is especially relevant at local-level for increased precision and comprehensiveness.

19. In terms of tasks ahead, a more effective identification of projects in Mongolia and the Russian Federation is necessary. Also, the collected data and information needs to be processed and streamlined in an accessible and user-friendly database of low-carbon urban strategies for wide information exchange among cities. The database will become available in the NEASPEC website as an interactive visual database, which will be continually updated when additional cities are identified and the progress on projects are reported.

IV. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

20. The Meeting may wish to provide the Secretariat with guidance on activity areas and modalities for Eco-efficiency Partnership, and endorse the request of the Suwon Conference for NEASPEC to act as a locus of information platform for collecting, analyzing and distributing strategies and plans for low carbon, green cities in North-East Asia.

21. The Meeting may wish to request member States to express their interests in the areas of the Partnership and nominate national institutions to jointly develop and implement the Partnership activities.

22. The Meeting may wish to request member States to provide national data, information and view on the draft publication, "North-East Asian Cities: Moving Towards Low Carbon, Green Cities".

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