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ENR/SO/ECNEA(7)/Rep.
4 March 2004

ENGLISH ONLY

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

**REPORT OF
THE NINTH MEETING OF SENIOR OFFICIALS ON
ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION IN NORTH-EAST ASIA**

Moscow, 4 March 2004

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I. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

1. The Meeting appreciated the efforts made in the implementation of NEASPEC Project I: Pollution Reduction in Coal-fired Power Plants, Project II: Environmental Monitoring, data Collection, Comparability and Analysis, and Project III: Efficiency Improvement of Electrostatic Precipitators in Existing Power Plants. It reaffirmed the importance of the projects and requested their continuation. The Meeting took note of the offer of Korean Electric Power Research Institute to organize on-site consultations and workshops in NEASPEC member countries upon request from them. The Meeting further noted with appreciation the financial support of the Asian Development Bank, Government of Republic of Korea and Government of Japan in implementing these projects and activities.
2. The Meeting reminded all the participating countries to communicate their data to NEACEDT. It took note with appreciation of Japan's intention to further the capacity building in monitoring in air pollution through organization of a training workshop in China. The Meeting also recommended that as far as possible, tools of information and communication technology be promoted in exchange of data and implementing training programmes. It also emphasized that besides gathering and managing data the information should be shared through the NEASPEC web site, which should also be used for dissemination of project information.
3. The Meeting endorsed the Terms of Reference and Recommendations of the Meeting of the Nature Conservation Group, convened by the secretariat in July 2003 in Bangkok at the request of SOM 8 (the Terms of Reference are attached as Annex I). Considering the priorities under nature conservation, the Meeting recommended to undertake activities under two priorities during the first phase, i.e. conservation and recovery of large mammals and threatened species; and conservation, monitoring and cooperative research on important migratory species. The other priorities are to be considered in the later phase. The Meeting recommended that the approaches to be followed in the implementation of activities under the above two priorities should as far as possible be based on the protection of the natural habitats and development of nature reserves.
4. The Meeting recommended that countries provide information to the Secretariat on completed and on-going activities in the above two priority areas. The Secretariat will collate this information and convene meetings of the Working Group of the Nature Conservation for the formulation of an appropriate project proposal for the consideration of SOM 10.
5. The Meeting highly appreciated the success achieved in the implementation of the project on the Control of Dust and Sand Storms in North-East Asia. The Meeting emphasized that it is a model project that exemplified new dimension of subregional cooperation and had tremendous opportunity for mobilizing funds and that this potential needs to be utilized effectively. The Meeting further noted the wish of the Russian Federation to participate in the project as an observer.
6. The Meeting noted with appreciation the financial contribution of Government of China to the Core Fund. The Meeting also noted with appreciation the intent of the Government of Japan and the

Government of Korea to make financial contribution to the Core Fund in the year 2004. The Meeting appreciated the remarks of the Russian Federation on in-kind contribution initially and the intention in the long run for possible financial contribution to the Core Fund.

7. The Meeting reaffirmed that the contribution to the NEASPEC Core Fund should continue on voluntary basis and all NEASPEC countries were encouraged to contribute to the Core Fund. It was also recommended that as much as possible funding for NEASPEC activities should also be explored from sources other than Core Fund.

8. The Meeting reviewed the budget sheet submitted by the secretariat and appreciated the careful use of Core Fund. The Meeting approved the budget for expenditure between SOM 9 and 10 as given in Annex II. It also requested the secretariat to report on the balance to the SOM 10. The Meeting also recommended to the secretariat to explore the possibility of generating interest on the Trust Fund.

9. The Meeting recommended the continuation of the Meeting of Senior Officials to guide the environmental cooperation in North-East Asia and suggested to have a meeting of the Ministers of Environment in North-East Asia at their convenience during the ESCAP Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific for promoting the NEASPEC programme.

10. The Meeting reviewed the brochure prepared by the secretariat on the NEASPEC and suggested that it would be important to mention NEASPEC's contribution to WSSD and post WSSD efforts in the implementation of WSSD. Likewise NEASPEC's input to the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific would need to be mentioned. It would also add value to include flags of the participating countries and relevant photos.

11. The Meeting noted that the 8th Special Session of the Governing Council/5th Global Ministerial Environmental Forum of UNEP, which is to be held in Jeju from 29 to 31 March 2004 is a rare occasion to present to the global community the common environmental concerns, such as Dust and Sand Storms in North-East Asia and solicit global contribution and support towards the NEASPEC projects. The Meeting also noted that side events are likely to be organized in the forthcoming UNEP Global Ministerial Environmental Forum and UNESCAP Commission Session.

12. The Meeting welcomed the generous offer of the Government of Japan to host the 10th Meeting of Senior Officials of NEASPEC in 2004. The venue and dates will be decided in consultations with the secretariat and announced in due course.

II PROCEEDINGS

A. Environment and development policies and issues for the North-East Asian Subregional Programme on Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC)

(Item 4 of the agenda)

13. The representative of the Republic of Korea reviewing the history of NEASPEC stated that it was initiated as an overarching forum, where all issues on environment could be discussed. It was

established as an initiative of shared vision of countries in North-East Asia to work together for mutual benefits. NEASPEC created the favourable environment of trust and cooperation among the countries in the subregion and that spirit assisted in attracting funds to support the activities in the subregion. The Dust and Sand Storm project was a very good example of successful cooperation and a model for united efforts in the subregion to solve a common environmental problem. He suggested that the member countries of NEASPEC, who are also members of the Global Environment Facility Council to make serious effort to ensure funding for the Full Size DSS and other future project in North-East Asia. Other areas of common interest need to be developed for such support. He stressed on NEASPEC's future effectiveness as a forum of common policy dialogue on issues related to climate change, nature conservation and ozone protection.

14. Republic of Korea highly appreciated the support provided by UNESCAP that has been serving as the secretariat to the NEASPEC and ensuring effective and efficient common work in the subregion. He emphasized that in the long run NEASPEC should have its own secretariat. His country will look into the opportunity to support and host such a secretariat if agreeable by all the NEASPEC member states. He welcomed the proposal to hold a Meeting of the NEASPEC Ministers during the 5th Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific. He further proposed to use forthcoming 8th GC/GMEF of UNEP to be held in Jeju, Republic of Korea at the end of March 2004 as an opportunity to discuss strengthening of cooperation in the NEASPEC. In terms of national policies, it was pointed out that the Republic of Korea had developed its national waste management programme which was being implemented very successfully resulting in drastic reduction of waste. A new initiative had also been introduced in the waste recycling field called extended producer responsibility system (EPRS) adopted in 2003.

15. The representative of China pointed out that NEASPEC was prompted by the Earth Summit and its outcomes were the guiding principles in the development of cooperation in the subregion. Recapitulating past efforts she stated that considerable achievements had been made by NEASPEC since its establishment. Besides project activities it had made contribution to the WSSD preparatory process and the input was duly reflected in the JPOI. In the mean time, it also has its weakness and limitations. To make it an effective mechanism up to the expectations of the member states, it was necessary to consider possible modalities to improve the working mechanisms of NEASPEC using means, such as – i) improved communication among the member states and raising awareness on the NEASPEC issues; ii) deliver tangible and measurable results in the implementation of the projects; iii) developing broad partnerships with international organizations and financial institutions; iv) utilizing practical, pragmatic and step-by-step approach and developing a pool of expertise unique to the NEASPEC. She underlined the importance for NEASPEC to facilitate the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in this subregion taking into account the needs of the member countries. Referring to environment and development policies of the Government of China, she emphasized that the Government is committed to sustainable development and will

continue to carry out its national strategy for sustainable development and enhance cooperation with other countries and International Organizations.

16. The representative of Japan highlighting the country's policy stated that the new priorities in Japan were to follow up the outcome of WSSD. In this regard sustainable consumption and production was a major priority of Japan. Sound Material Cycle Society was a major initiative established for this purpose which could be of interest to other countries of NEASPEC, particularly China and Republic of Korea. Climate change was another priority and guidelines had been developed in the country to combat global warming. Environmental education was another area of intervention where new laws had been promulgated to support environmental education and NPOs/NGOs. Referring to NEASPEC he stated that considerable benefits could be achieved by interaction between NEASPEC and other subregional cooperation mechanisms such as Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET), NOWPAP and the Joint Research Project on Long-Range Tran-boundary Air Pollutants in Northeast Asia (LTP).

17. The representative of the Russian Federation informed that environment and sustainable initiatives in the country were based on the findings of the State of the Environment report and guided by the Environmental Doctrine of the Russian Federation. He said that the country had ratified the UNCCD last year and as such had great interest in joining the Dust and Sand Storm project. He added that as a member of the GEF Council, the Russian Federation could effectively support the Full Size project. In terms of subregional cooperation he pointed out that the experience of the Russian federation as a member of both UNECE and UNESCAP could catalyse the transfer of knowledge and expertise, which could also be helpful to NEASPEC in such activities as application of the precautionary principle, including trans-boundary environmental impact assessment of projects. He added that the Russian Federation was an active member of the UNECE convention on trans-boundary rivers and international lakes. This convention was open to all the countries, including those of the NEASPEC. He encouraged NEASPEC member countries to develop a legally binding document defining the principles for subregional cooperation. He also advocated development of a subregional action plan in areas like nature/biodiversity conservation (for threatened species such as the Amur tiger and Far East leopard).

18. The representative of Mongolia expressed his satisfaction with the implementation of the project implementation of projects I, II and III. The Government of Mongolia is supporting all the proposed activities under the project IV of the NEASPEC and is committed to supporting all the current and any future activities developed in subregion.

19. The representative of UNEP expressed his satisfaction with the achievements of NEASPEC and proceedings of SOM 9. This he considered as a good example of cooperation between UN agencies such as UNESCAP and UNEP at the subregional level. He advocated similar cooperation between UN agencies in other subregional programmes and projects.

B. Consideration of the Recommendations of the Preparatory Meeting of Experts

(Item 5 of the agenda)

20. The Meeting had before it the recommendations and conclusions of the Preparatory Meeting of Experts for the Ninth Meeting of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia, held at Moscow, 2 to 3 March 2004. The recommendations and conclusions covered: (a), Programme planning and implementation – implementation status of on-going projects: I, II, III and IV (b), Report on Core Fund, (c) Venue, date and provisional agenda of the Tenth Meeting of Senior Officials, and (d) Other matters.

21. The Meeting reviewed the recommendations and conclusions, and adopted them.

C. Venue, date and provisional agenda of the Tenth Meeting of Senior Officials

(Item 6 of the agenda)

22. The Meeting discussed the venue, date and agenda of the Tenth Meeting of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia.

23. The provisional agenda of the Meeting is as follows:

1. Opening session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Environment and development policies and issues for the North-East Asian Subregional Programme of Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC).
5. Programme planning and implementation:
 - (a) Implementation of ongoing projects;
 - (b) Proposed projects/activities.
6. Further development of the North-East Asian Subregional Programme of Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC).
7. Contribution of the NEASPEC to the 5th Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2005.
8. Report on the Core Fund
9. Other Matters
10. Adoption of the report.
11. Closing of the Meeting

III. ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

24. The Ninth Meeting of Senior Officials on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia was held in Moscow on 4 March 2004. It was organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and hosted by the Government of the Russian Federation.

A. Attendance

25. The Meeting was attended by representatives of China, Japan, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation. It was also attended by representatives of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

B. Opening session

26. In his welcome statement, the Chief of the Environment Section, Environment and Sustainable Development Division of ESCAP expressed his sincere appreciation to the Government of the Russian Federation for hosting this important meeting and for all its hospitality and excellent arrangements. He highlighted the tangible results that had come out of the Preparatory Meeting of Experts. In particular, with regard to implementation of NEASPEC projects as well as the modalities of administration of the Core Fund for NEASPEC. He expected that further development of NEASPEC could open new horizons for subregional environmental cooperation, enhance awareness and develop avenues for participating countries to learn from each other experience.

27. The opening statement at the Meeting was delivered by the Director of the International Relations Department, Ministry of Nature Resources Protection of the Russian Federation. He emphasized that considerable achievements had been made by NEASPEC in follow-up to the WSSD. Its approach of technical cooperation as a priority in its programme implementation, based on the specific conditions of the subregion following the principle of a practical and step-by-step approach was a major contributory factor to its success. He hoped that, based on the conclusions and recommendations of the Preparatory Meeting, the Meeting of Senior Officials would make a concrete and effective contribution to advancing the implementation of ongoing environmental cooperation programme in the subregion.

C. Election of officers

28. Mr Sergey Tveritinov (Russian Federation) was elected as the Chairperson of the Meeting. Mr. Satoshi Tanaka (Japan) was elected as the Vice-Chairperson. Ms. Bai Yongjie was elected as the Rapporteur.

D. Adoption of the agenda

29. The Meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Environment and sustainable development policies and critical issues in North-East Asia.

5. Consideration of the Report of the Preparatory Meeting of Experts.
6. Venue, date and agenda of the Eighth Meeting of Senior Officials.
7. Other matters.
8. Adoption of the report.

IV. OTHER MATTERS

(Item 7 of the agenda)

30. The Meeting expressed its deep appreciation to the Government of the Russian Federation for generously hosting the Preparatory Meeting and the Meeting of Senior Officials and for its warm hospitality and the excellent arrangements made for the Meetings.

V. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

(Item 8 of the agenda)

31. The Meeting adopted the report on 4 March 2004.

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ANNEX I

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE WORKING GROUP ON NATURE CONSERVATION IN NORTH-EAST ASIA

I. *Background*

1. At the Eighth Senior Officials Meeting on Environmental Cooperation in North-East Asia (SOM8) held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia in June 2002 it was decided to initiate work on nature conservation in North-East Asia. The Meeting emphasized that stakeholders should be involved in the process and suggested areas of actions specifically on capacity building, exchange of information and expertise, data base management, scientific research and use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

2. To elaborate on the scope of work for nature conservation, the Meeting recommended to establish the working group of national focal points on nature conservation whose task will be to identify priority areas for development of projects in nature conservation, initiate exchange of information to grasp issues and problems and to bring issues to the attention of governments for cooperative action. Accordingly, terms of reference have been prepared for the consideration of this Meeting as follows:

II. *Suggested Terms of Reference for the Working Group on Nature Conservation*

A. Scope and Structure

3. The Working Group on Nature Conservation will primarily guide and oversee the formulation, development and implementation of the Nature (Biodiversity) Conservation Programme for North-East Asia. It will provide support to the Senior Officials of the North-East Asia Subregional Programme on Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC), in identifying areas where cooperation is needed in the implementation of subregional activities on nature conservation. The Working Group shall be represented by at least one of the nominated national focal point from each of the countries in the subregion. The Working Group shall meet at least once a year.

B. General Activities

4. The working group of national focal points shall:

- a) Formulate the framework for the Nature Conservation Programme for North-East Asia. To this end the working group may propose the setting up of ad hoc expert committee(s) on specific topics that will be identified under the programme;
- b) Identify priority areas for development of projects under the Nature Conservation Programme which are directed towards a rational approach to nature conservation in the sub-region;
- c) Formulate activities on exchange of information and data base, scientific research and expertise in nature conservation;
- d) Foster cooperation in the implementation of national and subregional activities under the ambit of the Nature Conservation Programme for North-East Asia;

- e) Develop progress reports on the implementation of the Nature Conservation Programme for North-East Asia, for presentation to the SOMs; and
- f) Serve as venue for grasping issues and problems relating to nature conservation and bring these issues to the attention of governments for cooperative action.

A. C. Information related activities

- a) Promote a network of institutions dealing with nature conservation in the respective countries.
- b) Develop an inventory of activities related to biodiversity conservation particularly national, subregional projects including those that are funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other bilateral and multilateral agencies.

ANNEX II
REPORT ON EXPENDITURE OF THE CORE FUND

1. Expenditure of the NEASPCE Core Fund for the period between SOM 8 and SOM 9.

Report on Expenditure of the NEASPEC Core Fund

Member States Contributions	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total
Republic of Korea	100000.00	100000.00			
Japan	100000.00		72000.00		
People's Republic of China			50000.00		
Total (2001-2003)	200000.00	100000.00	122000.00		422000.00

Expenditure (SOM 8 to SOM 9)	Budget Line			2003	2004*	Total
<i>Secretariat</i>						
Staff Travel	3200				5430.00	5430.00
Reporting	5200					0.00
Sundry	5300			1573.25	300.00	1873.25
<i>Activities</i>						
First Meeting of the Working Group on Nature Conservation				17387.35		17387.35
Second Meeting of WG on Nature Conservation during SOM 9					7404.53	7404.53
Total Expenditure						32095.13
13% Programme Support Cost	5600					4172.37
Total Available in Core Fund by 2 March 2004						389904.87

* Expenditure is an estimate as per 1 March 2004

2. Proposed expenditure of the Core Fund

Planned Expenditure (SOM 9 to SOM 10)

<i>Secretariat</i>		
Travel	3200	10000.00
Reporting	5200	5000.00
Sundry	5300	2500.00
<i>Activities</i>		
Two Meetings of the WG on Nature Conservation		35000.00
13% Programme Support Cost	5600	6825.00
Total		59325.00