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Twenty-eighth Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of NEASPEC

22-23 September 2025

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

**REPORT OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING
OF THE NORTH-EAST ASIAN SUBREGIONAL PROGRAMME FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION**

1. The Twenty-Eighth Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) was held in Ulaanbaatar, on 22-23 September 2025 and hosted by the Government of Mongolia. The Meeting was organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia, serving as NEASPEC secretariat, and was chaired by the Government of Mongolia.

I. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Reaffirming the commitments of the member States to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and recognizing the contribution of NEASPEC to promote subregional environmental cooperation, the Meeting highlighted 2025 as a pivotal year marking the approval of the next NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2026-2030 which will serve as a cornerstone for strengthening NEASPEC's programmatic areas and their contributions to regional and global environmental initiatives.

3. **Air Pollution:** The Meeting welcomed the implementation of the North-East Asia Clean Air Partnership (NEACAP) Work Plan 2021-2025, which has delivered concrete outputs on science-policy interface development, knowledge sharing and outreach. The Meeting further welcomed the finalized NEACAP activities in 2025, including the completion of the NEACAP Policy Analysis Report "*Success and Challenges in Addressing Air Pollution in North-East Asia: A Call to Strengthen Regional Collaboration*", a milestone research collaboration under NEASPEC, as well as the NEACAP associated events organized in conjunction with SOM-28. The Meeting noted the outcomes of the

Seventh Meeting of the Science and Policy (SPC) Committee, where SPC members and Technical Center (TC) representatives submitted a finalized draft NEACAP Work Plan 2026-2030 and the NEACAP Activity Plan 2026, for the approval of SOM-28.

4. In line with the NEACAP's primary responsibility and core mission, the focus for the next cycle will be air pollution. The Meeting reviewed the drafts and considered the proposed Work Plan text revisions on 2.1 (household cooking), Priority 4.1.1 (i.e., in line of focusing more on air pollution in the next five years and reduce texts on climate strategy) and on 4.2 Institutional Roles (i.e., importance to retain texts from the NEACAP Work Plan 2021-2025 on the role of SOM as the decision-making body of NEASPEC, as well as implementation and monitoring.). The Meeting welcomed the support expressed by member States in the implementation of the next five-year NEACAP work plan, including through the roles of TCs in organizing outreach and capacity building activities. The Meeting approved the NEACAP Work Plan 2026-2030 (with the proposed text revisions) and the NEACAP Activity Plan 2026.

5. **Biodiversity and Nature Conservation:** The Meeting was informed of the progress on the thematic area of biodiversity and nature conservation, including on the activities on flagship species and their habitats, transboundary cooperation, and the implementation of the project funded by the Russian Federation. The Meeting acknowledged the revision of the International Single Species Action Plan for the Black-faced Spoonbill (2026-2036) and noted project outputs under the Russian Federation-funded initiative, including the completed study on the impacts of energy infrastructure, ongoing simultaneous monitoring, and the completed training workshop for young crane researchers. Recognizing the importance of enhanced cooperation on big cats, the Meeting noted progress in the transboundary conservation of Amur tiger, Amur leopard, and Snow leopard, including the development of a knowledge-sharing platform to be launched in 2026. The Meeting reviewed and approved the activity plan for 2026.

6. **Marine Protected Areas:** The Meeting took note of the progress achieved by the North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN) under the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2021-2025, including the completion of studies on climate change and MPAs for China and the Republic of Korea, to be published in late 2025. The Meeting welcomed the efforts of the secretariat to enhance knowledge-sharing and capacity-building activities through the organization of workshops, MPA Talks, and the Expert Group Meeting on marine mammals, as well as outreach activities contributing to regional and global forums. Recognizing the value of the recent studies in supporting national priority setting and site-level actions, the Meeting encouraged the continuation of similar studies in other member States. The Meeting also recognized the importance of MPAs and Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs) in achieving the 30 by 30 target under the Global Biodiversity Framework and Sustainable Development Goal 14. The Meeting further took note of proposals to address emerging issues, including plastic pollution. The Meeting reviewed and approved the activity plan for 2026.

7. **Low Carbon Cities:** The Meeting welcomed the progress in this programmatic area, including the successful organization of the 5th International Forum on Low Carbon Cities. Senior officials

acknowledged the significant efforts of member States in promoting carbon neutrality and low-carbon development at national and municipal levels and encouraged continued active participation of cities and municipalities in NEASPEC activities. The Meeting also expressed appreciation regarding the preparation of the Low Carbon City Networks booklet and the proposed online platform for knowledge exchange and noted the establishment of a working group on Low Carbon Cities in North-East Asia proposed by the 5th International Forum on Low Carbon Cities. The Meeting further took note of the interest of the Russian Federation in hosting the 6th International Forum on Low Carbon Cities in 2026 in Moscow. The Meeting reviewed and approved the activity plan for 2026.

8. **Desertification and Land Degradation:** The Meeting acknowledged the progress made in the work programme on desertification and land degradation (DLD). It also noted the plan to continue with the preparation of a study on the main causes, drivers and impacts of DLD, with a focus on climate, land and water, and to organize an associated event in conjunction with the 17th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), scheduled for August 2026. The Meeting requested the secretariat to reflect droughts and sand and dust storms (SDS), without duplication of efforts while creating synergies with other relevant subregional entities, extending partnerships with relevant subregional entities in the regional cooperation on DLD, and to closely consult with member States on the matter. Member States shared progress made in addressing DLD, including preparations for UNCCD COP17. The Meeting reviewed and approved the activity plan for 2026.

9. **The Core Fund and Project-based Fund:** The Meeting was briefed on the composition of NEASPEC expenditure of the Core Fund since SOM-27, as well as the ongoing Project-based Fund. The Meeting noted the significant decrease in the NEASPEC Core Fund, acknowledging the need for voluntary-based increased financial and in-kind contributions to cope with the envisaged financial constraints that NEASPEC operations will face beyond 2027. The Meeting accepted the financial report and approved the proposed programme planning and management, including the budget plan.

10. **NEASPEC Strategic Plan for 2026-2030:** The Meeting noted the development process of the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2026-2030 aligned with the guidance from the member States during SOM-27. The SOM-28 acknowledged the main objectives and the partnership-oriented, capacity-building based, information-sharing, and synergy-seeking approaches of the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2026-2030 which would also ensure interlinkages among the programmatic areas. The Senior Officials suggested exploring synergies and possible overlaps between the two NEASPEC programmatic areas – Biodiversity and Nature Conservation, and Marine Protected Areas – in the development of the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2026-2030. The Meeting reviewed and adopted the revised draft of the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2026-2030, which includes the expansion of NEAMPAN sites.

11. **Plan for the Next SOM:** The Meeting welcomed the statement of the Russian Federation to host SOM-29, noting that the meeting will be held in Moscow, Q4 2026. The exact venue and time will be announced in due course, in consultations with the member States and the secretariat and taking into consideration other regional and global events.

12. Delegates expressed appreciation to the Government of Mongolia and the Chair for the successful hosting and arrangement of the SOM-28. The Chair thanked the secretariat for its preparatory work and thanked delegations for their active and dedicated participation in the Meeting.

II. PROCEEDINGS OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING

A. Attendance

13. The Meeting was attended by the delegations from China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea, and the Russian Federation, together with experts and representatives of international organizations and partners.

B. Opening session

14. His Excellency, Mr. Zolbayar Togtokhjargal, State Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change of Mongolia, delivered the welcoming remarks on behalf of the host Government. He reflected on the shared responsibilities and a common future for North-East Asia, highlighting the environmental challenges the sub-region faces - climate change, land degradation, biodiversity loss, and transboundary air pollution, as well as commending NEASPEC's efforts in translating words into practical cooperation on addressing these challenges. On inviting the Meeting to reflect on how to build on the results of the region's cooperation, Mr. Togtokhjargal affirmed that from Mongolia's perspective, regional cooperation is not a choice but a 'strategic necessity', as resilience for Mongolia cannot be achieved in isolation as a landlocked and climate-vulnerable country. Outlining Mongolia's adaptation of its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) under the Paris Agreement, development and implementation of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, and the plan to upgrade its Land Degradation Neutrality targets next year as part the host's roles of COP17, he highlighted Mongolia's active efforts to strengthen its national frameworks in alignment with global goals. Affirming Mongolia's delight in hosting the UNCCD COP17 in 2026 and its focus on pathways to COP17, Mr. Togtokhjargal highlighted the strategic significance of COP17 for Mongolia as a chance to demonstrate leadership, showcase regional achievements, and deliver concrete solutions for the world. Mr. Togtokhjargal also shared that Mongolia will put forward specific initiatives for regional international partnership, including the Rangelands Flagship Initiative, Integrated Water and Land Management, and Nature-based Solutions for Sustainable Infrastructure.

15. Regarded as part of the pathways to UNCCD COP17, Mr. Togtokhjargal outlined the importance of SOM-28 discussions in shaping the shared positions and responsibilities of the member States, ensuring the voice of North-East Asia resonates strongly on the global stage, as well as deepening trust and enhancing cooperation. Urging for more regional cooperation as the 'best investment for a sustainable future', Mr. Togtokhjargal officially declared the opening of the 28th Senior Officials Meeting of NEASPEC.

16. The Senior Officials Meeting was opened by Mr. Ganbold Baasanjav, Head of the ESCAP Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia (ESCAP SRO ENEA). He welcomed the delegates and representatives of the 28th Senior Officials Meeting of NEASPEC (SOM-28), as well as distinguished delegates and representatives of partner agencies, expressing sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change of Mongolia for its excellent arrangements and

warm hospitality in hosting the Meeting in Ulaanbaatar. Reflecting on NEASPEC's history of more than thirty years, he highlighted its crucial role as a distinctive forum for environmental collaboration that unites member countries to tackle subregional, regional, and global challenges. He emphasized that this year's meeting is pivotal as it marks the beginning of the new NEASPEC Strategic Plan for 2026-2030. To ensure the success of this new phase, he encouraged ongoing support and active engagement from member States, especially through financial contributions, to help NEASPEC continue driving forward the sustainable development agenda.

C. Election of officers

17. The Meeting elected the following officers:

Chair:	Mr. Oyunsanaa Byambasuren (Mongolia)
Vice-Chair:	Ms. GE Shaotong (China)
Rapporteur:	Ms. Abidat Magomedova (Russian Federation)

D. Adoption of the agenda

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Election of officers
3. Adoption of the agenda
4. Statements by delegations of member States, UN, and international organizations on issues related to sustainable development in North-East Asia
5. Review of programme planning and implementation
 - a) Air Pollution
 - b) Biodiversity and Nature Conservation
 - c) Marine Protected Areas
 - d) Low Carbon Cities
 - e) Desertification and Land Degradation
6. Review of the Core Fund and Project-based Fund
7. Review of Draft NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2026-2030
8. Venue, date and provisional agenda of the Twenty-ninth Senior Officials Meeting (SOM-29)
9. Other issues
10. Adoption of the conclusions and recommendations of the Meeting

E. Policy issues related to sustainable development in North-East Asia

(Agenda item 4)

11. The representative of China highlighted that environmental work in North-East Asia is of great importance and affirmed its active participation in NEASPEC's cooperation, emphasizing progress in the five key areas. Firstly, on air pollution, she detailed significant progress in controlling PM_{2.5}, noting that in 2024 the average concentration was 29.3 µg/m³, a 36% decrease from 2015, while days with heavy pollution fell to just 0.9%. Her statement outlined key tasks for the 15th Five-Year Plan, including promoting the synergetic reduction of nitrogen oxides and VOCs and advancing the green transition in industry and transport. Regarding biodiversity, she highlighted the establishment of the first five national parks, including Sanjiangyuan and Giant Panda National Parks, covering 230,000 square kilometres. Wildlife protection has been advanced through both in-situ and ex-situ conservation, the establishment of two National Botanic Gardens, and a crackdown on illegal wildlife trade, resulting in population growth for over 300 rare species. In marine protected areas, 63 ecological restoration projects were implemented during the 14th Five-Year Plan, supported by 15.9 billion yuan in central funds, which restored over 380 km of coastline and more than 30,000 hectares of coastal wetlands. For low carbon cities, she noted that 81 pilot projects have been carried out since 2010, and a 2025 notice promotes key tasks such as expanding the national carbon emission trading market and strengthening statistical accounting. On desertification, she reported that 53% of treatable desertified land has been successfully treated through comprehensive policy, monitoring, and emergency response systems, leading to economic benefits where income from forest products now exceeds 50% of net income for farmers in key areas. She concluded by reaffirming that China will continue to participate in and support NEASPEC's work.

12. The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stated that environmental protection is a top priority for the government, viewing it as essential for protecting the people and improving living conditions. He informed of national actions, including the establishment of a scientific management database and a nationwide environmental monitoring network that monitors air, lakes, oceans, and soil pollution in real time to enable prompt countermeasures. Affirming that forestation is a key national policy, he detailed recent achievements which include cultivating over 2 billion high-quality tree seedlings of more than 100 species last year and planting hundreds of millions of trees across over 100,000 hectares this spring. He stressed that environmental protection is regarded as a long-term "patriotic undertaking" that mobilizes the entire population. He noted his personal appreciation for Mongolia's Billion Trees Campaign and acknowledged that environmental protection increasingly requires regional and international cooperation. In conclusion, he affirmed the continued commitment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to developing cooperation with regional countries on environmental projects.

13. The representative of Japan advocated for an integrated approach to address the three global crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution to promote synergies. He outlined Japan's domestic framework, including a cabinet-level SDGs Promotion Headquarters, and its third Voluntary National Review (VNR), which showcased initiatives addressing societal challenges like an aging population and disaster prevention. He also announced an initiative to prepare an Asia-Pacific Synergy Report in cooperation with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and ESCAP. Regarding climate change, he reiterated Japan's goal of achieving net-zero by 2050 and its NDC target

of a 46% emissions reduction by FY2030, noting a reduction of approximately 27% had already been achieved by FY2023. He announced new ambitious targets of a 60% reduction by FY2035 and 73% by FY2040 from FY2013 levels. The delegate stressed that international cooperation is being advanced, in Japan, through the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM), with over 270 projects that provide co-benefits such as capacity training and air pollution reduction. He also highlighted the Article 6 Implementation Partnership, which now includes 89 countries and over 250 organizations. On plastic pollution, he referenced the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision, which aims for zero additional pollution by 2050. He expressed deep regret that the INC-5.2 session ended without an agreement and affirmed Japan's commitment to developing an effective treaty. For biodiversity, he stated that Japan will support the swift and full implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) by sharing experiences from its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) and supporting on-the-ground projects. He concluded by stating that Japan is accelerating efforts to simultaneously achieve a Net-Zero, Circular Economy, and Nature Positive society.

14. The representative of Mongolia re-emphasized that the Meeting was an occasion to reflect on shared responsibilities, calling 2025 a "key momentum" year for multilateral environmental cooperation. He noted that 2025 as the deadline for member States to update their NDCs and NBSAPs. He informed the Meeting that Mongolia's updated NDC, to be announced before COP30, has a 30% reduction target achievable through unconditional efforts, which can be scaled up to 40% with external support. He added that the country's NBSAP update is focused on localizing "nature-based solutions" and enhancing integrated natural resource management. While air pollution remains a challenge, he expressed hope that NEASPEC's work would yield significant outcomes. The Billion Trees national movement was highlighted as a major contribution to combating desertification, and appreciation was expressed for the support of all partners. He noted that the delegation included youth representatives to emphasize intergenerational cooperation and welcomed the upcoming thematic sessions.

15. The representative of the Republic of Korea noted that this year marks the tenth anniversary of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, but challenges remain, with only 35 percent of SDG targets on track and the global average temperature having exceeded the 1.5-degree threshold last year. She stated that the current administration is reforming the economy towards carbon neutrality and accelerating the transition to renewable energy sources like solar and offshore wind. This year, the Republic of Korea is chairing the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) under the theme 'Building a Sustainable Tomorrow: Connect, Innovate, Prosper'. On air pollution, the Republic of Korea is reducing fine dust by cutting emission sources and phasing out old coal plants; seasonal measures last winter and spring reduced PM_{2.5} by 3.3%, the lowest level since 2019. She also highlighted that the Republic of Korea hosted the Fifth International Forum on Transboundary Air Pollution and shared key takeaways from the NEACAP Policy Analysis Report. In biodiversity, the restoration of major river ecosystems is a national priority, and the country is actively participating in the NEASPEC 2024-2027 flagship project to conserve migratory bird habitats. To meet the 30 by 30 marine target, the Republic of Korea is expanding marine protected areas and hosted the Our Ocean Conference in Busan in April. For low carbon cities, all local governments adopted carbon neutrality action strategies in May under the Carbon Neutral Green Growth Framework Plan. In combating desertification, the Republic of Korea is collaborating with Mongolia through the Korea-Mongolia

Greenbelt Project, and a new reforestation and nursery training centre was completed in Mongolia's Selenge Province in June, establishing a key platform for bilateral forest cooperation. She concluded that the Republic of Korea would continue to work closely with member states to reinvigorate progress toward the SDGs.

16. The representative of the Russian Federation affirmed that NEASPEC is a reliable platform for strengthening scientific cooperation and promoting projects, emphasizing that "Ecology knows no borders". On air pollution, the Russian Federation is implementing the federal project Clean Air, which aims for a gradual reduction of hazardous emissions by 50 percent by 2036 through industrial modernization and the introduction of environmentally friendly public utilities and transport. She expressed hope to host the 6th International Low Carbon Cities Forum in the Russian Federation in 2026. On desertification, the Russian Federation supports the concept of land degradation neutrality and, since 2019, has implemented a "compensatory" reforestation mechanism, which requires entities that cause deforestation to reforest an equivalent area; this has been carried out on 223 thousand hectares. For nature conservation, the Russian Federation places a systematic emphasis on its 11,700 specially protected natural areas, which cover over 243 million hectares. A new federal project, Preservation of Biological Diversity and Development of Ecotourism, was implemented this year to promote the sustainable development of these areas. Regarding marine protected areas, her statement noted that non-spatial management options should be explored to maintain a balance between conservation and livelihoods. She concluded by noting that the Russian Federation has accumulated vast experience from its National Project Ecological Well-being in areas including waste management, landfill liquidation, and forest conservation, and is open to sharing its expertise through joint projects within NEASPEC.

17. The representative of the Northeast Asian Youth Climate Council informed of the council's mission to bring youth perspectives to the intersection of climate and peace, and she affirmed the council's readiness and full commitment to collaborating with NEASPEC and its member countries.

18. The representative of the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) described 2025 as a "super year for the oceans," highlighting the 3rd UN Ocean Conference in Nice, France and the 10th Our Ocean Conference in Busan, Republic of Korea. He announced that the High Seas Treaty (BBNJ) has now been ratified by over 60 countries and will enter into force next year. He noted that less than 5% of the region's marine areas are protected and emphasized the Kunming-Montreal GBF target of 30% coverage by 2030, highlighting the importance of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECMs).

19. The representative of the Hanns Seidel Foundation highlighted the foundation's focus on biodiversity collaboration with NEASPEC, including past joint survey work. He noted that while flagship species programmes have seen success, the primary goal is protecting their habitats, which are under threat. All NEASPEC countries were encouraged to participate in the upcoming East Asian-Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) Meeting of the Parties, and China, Mongolia, and the Russian Federation were urged to engage with the emerging Central Asian Flyway partnership. Hope

was also expressed that joint efforts to protect birds in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea can continue.

F. Presentations and discussions on substantive agenda items (Agenda items 5, 6, and 7)

20. The Meeting heard presentations from the secretariat on agenda item 5: Review of programme planning and implementation; agenda item 6: Review of the Core Fund and Project-based Fund; and item 7: Review of the Strategic Plan 2026-2030, followed by interventions from the member States, partner organizations, and experts. Key outcomes of discussions on these agenda items are included in the Conclusions and Recommendations in Section I of the Report of the Meeting.

Agenda item 5 (a) Air Pollution

21. The Meeting acknowledged the progress made in addressing air pollution in 2025 aligned with the implementation of the North-East Asia Clean Air Partnership (NEACAP) Work Plan 2021-2025. The Meeting was briefed on the NEACAP Policy Analysis Report, to be showcased in the 2nd Policy Dialogue, as well as the programme of the National Workshop on Air Quality Management in Mongolia, to be held on 23 and 24 September, respectively, in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The Meeting acknowledged the progress of knowledge dissemination, including information sharing exercises under the Regional Action Program on Air Pollution (RAPAP), and NEACAP's coordination with other regional networks. The Meeting reviewed and adopted the NEACAP Activity Plan 2026 as well as the revised draft of the NEACAP Work Plan 2026-2030, which were key outcomes of the 7th Meeting of the NEACAP Science and Policy Committee (SPC).

22. The representative of China expressed gratitude to the secretariat for the revised draft NEACAP Work Plan 2026-2030 and clarified on the proposed revisions (i.e. pages 4, 7, and 8). The representative first pointed out the impact of cooking is severely disproportionate compared to that of power plants, large industrial facilities, road transport and clean heating, thereby suggested it be removed. The representative, then, stressed that air pollution remains the focus of NEACAP and a common challenge for the member States, which will benefit from more policy exchange on PM_{2.5} and ozone in the next five years. Due to the disparity of development levels among the member States and the insufficient understanding of climate strategy within each member State, the representative considered it difficult to formulate a regional strategy on air pollution that synergizes with climate change, and therefore proposed reducing the texts on air pollution and climate synergies in the draft. The representative also proposed exchanges of policy and experiences related to air quality among member States in the next five years. Considering the co-benefits of mitigating air pollutants and carbon dioxide, the representative suggested that NEACAP should promote the exchange of strategies and research on the impacts of climate change on air pollution. The representative concluded by suggesting that relevant texts be reflected in the section on implementation approach in the Work Plan 2026-2030, in alignment with the previous NEACAP Work Plan 2021-2025.

23. The representative of Mongolia appreciated the joint efforts of the secretariat and member States for tackling transboundary air pollution. The representative welcomed the NEACAP Policy Analysis Report and the NEACAP Work Plan 2026-2030. The representative also welcomed the secretariat's efforts to organize the NEACAP National Workshop and the 2nd Policy Dialogue in Mongolia. The representative affirmed that Mongolia's belief in the subregional joint effort shall contribute significantly to the Asia-Pacific Clean Air Partnership for long term and greater generations. She also affirmed the position of Mongolia to enhance, improve, and reach solid consensus on NEACAP and air pollution and continued to call for cooperation and consensus in the implementation and the policy-level outreach of air pollution. The representative expressed gratitude to partner countries and their respective designated organizations in supporting Mongolia's national actions for better air quality. The representative shared that with the support from the Republic of Korea, Mongolia has successfully installed nationwide automatic stations for real-time air-quality monitoring which constitute the main big data collection system and subsequently support the development and formulation of evidence-based climate change and air pollution policies. The representative also informed that a joint working group has been established to implement the Framework Agreement on Climate Change between Mongolia and the Republic of Korea, with one of its key and urgent tasks being the development of a master plan to reduce air pollution, tackle pollution sources, and improve the nexus of air pollution and climate change.

24. The representative of the Republic of Korea expressed support for the NEACAP Work Plan 2026-2030 and the NEACAP Activity Plan 2026, hoping to lay the groundwork for member States to enhance their joint efforts to improve air quality in North-East Asia, and for NEACAP to function as an effective platform for international cooperation. Regarding the NEACAP Activity Plan 2026, the representative informed of the joint organization of the international symposium by National Air Emission Inventory and Research Center (NAIR) of the Republic of Korea and ESCAP East and North-East Asia Subregional Office, in commemoration of the International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies. Building on this achievement, the representative further shared that NAIR seeks to enhance its contribution to NEACAP by strengthening the foundation for international cooperation in the field of air quality, fulfilling its role as the NEACAP Technical Centre, and contributing to the organization of international symposiums. The representative also affirmed that the National Institute of Environmental Research (NIER) of the Republic of Korea seeks to strengthen its role as a NEACAP designated Technical Centre by organizing an international workshop and related initiatives.

25. One of the NEACAP SPC members sought further clarification on the amendments proposed by China in the last paragraph, which states that 'the implementation of monitoring and activities will be coordinated by the SPC'. The SPC member noted that the wording 'coordinated by' may generate confusion, as it suggests of the SPC's role as a coordinating body rather than an advisory body, as such, proposed adjusting the wording to 'coordinated with the SPC' or another appropriate alternative to avoid such confusion, and requested clarification from the secretariat.

26. The secretariat responded that the wording in question, suggested by China, is consistent with the NEACAP Work Plan 2021-2025, which was adopted as 'coordinated by the SPC and overseen by

the SOM'. In this context, the secretariat noted that any decision to revise the wording, following the intervention from an SPC member, would be subject to discussion among member States.

27. The representative of the Northeast Asian Youth Climate Council shared the plan of youth organizations to propose a policy watchdog project over the coming year and inquired if NEACAP would support youth representatives through capacity building and technical support, particularly in relation to priority areas mentioned in the NEACAP Work Plan 2026-2030 (i.e., 4.1.3 and 4.1.4). The secretariat affirmed that NEACAP welcomes the engagement of diverse stakeholders, noting that it aims to ensure activities across all programmatic areas, including air pollution, are well connected with the majority of stakeholders.

28. The representative of the Russian Federation expressed support for the amendments of the draft NEACAP Work Plan 2026-2030 proposed by China. The representative clarified that the wording raised by one of the SPC members does not impose any additional obligations on the SPC, as the SPC remains as a monitoring and coordinating body that assists in the implementation of policies. Accordingly, the SPC would not be burdened with obligations previously mentioned. The representative commended NEACAP as a crucial platform for sharing information, exchanging views, and building capacity in monitoring air pollution policies, and expressed full support for the implementation of the Work Plan.

Agenda item 5 (b) Biodiversity and Nature Conservation

29. Noting the progress achieved by NEASPEC on Biodiversity and Nature Conservation, the Meeting acknowledged the progress of the International Single Species Action Plan of Black-faced Spoonbill, to be revised and submitted to the Convention on Migratory Species in 2026. The Meeting was briefed on the progress of the project, 'Connectivity Conservation for Habitats of Flagship Migratory Birds in North-East Asia' funded by the Russian Federation, including the consultation meeting for simultaneous monitoring of the target species, the analytical study on energy infrastructure impacts on migratory birds, and the training workshop for young crane researchers. The Meeting acknowledged the progress and planned activities for the conservation of big cats, including the summary report of the completed project, 'Transboundary Cooperation on the Conservation of Amur tiger, Amur leopard, and Snow leopard in North-East Asia', as well as the development of a knowledge-sharing platform to serve as a regional hub for data exchange, collaborative research, and multi-stakeholder engagement, with a prototype to be launched in 2026. The Meeting provided feedback on the ongoing activities for the migratory birds and big feline species. The Meeting reviewed and adopted the Activity Plan for Biodiversity and Nature Conservation in 2026.

30. The representative of the Russian Federation expressed appreciation for the kind words and passionate presentation by the secretariat. The representative affirmed that nature conservation remains the national focus of the Russian Federation, and that the delegation is pleased with the progress on the collaboration project. The representative informed of the testing sites decided with VNII Ecology to be Daursky State Nature Reserve, Muravyevsky Nature Reserve, and Far Eastern Marine Reserve (Furugelma Island) for the migratory bird monitoring activity implementation in the

first quarter of 2026. The representative shared that the analytical study by Dr. Who Seung Lee was well received. The representative further shared that by clearly demonstrating the impact of renewable energy infrastructure on the migratory birds' flyway, the study was considered necessary and beneficial for the Russian Federation. Regarding the Russian Federation's cooperation with China within NEASPEC, the representative informed of the considerable progress on conservation of big cats in the 'Land of Leopard Transboundary Nature Reserves.' The representative also expressed appreciation of the collaborative efforts with Mongolia on snow leopard conservation, where the support from Mongolia to initiatives of the Russian Federation on the introduction of the species into the Russian Federation was also appreciated. The representative proceeded to affirm the continued interest of the Russian Federation in bilateral cooperation within the established mechanisms. The representative concluded by welcoming the participation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

31. The representative of the Republic of Korea expressed appreciation for the continued efforts of member States and the secretariat in the nature conservation area. For migratory birds, the representative welcomed the revision of the International Single Species Action Plan for Black-faced Spoonbill 2026-2036. The representative also reiterated support for the implementation of the North-East Asia connectivity conservation project for key migratory bird habitats approved. The representative informed that as a country with a major breeding ground for Black-faced Spoonbills, the Republic of Korea has actively implemented habitat initiatives in parallel with the systematic breeding population survey. While there are remaining challenges and emerging threats, the representative shared with delight that the breeding population in the Republic of Korea for the Black-faced Spoonbill has increased. Regarding the conservation of big feline species, the representative commended the achievements so far and welcomed the prospect of more sustainable transboundary cooperation through the expansion of collaboration, strengthening of governance structures, mobilization of stable financial resources, and greater involvement of local communities, as noted in the report. Upon emphasizing the necessity of open and effective exchange of data and outcomes for effective cooperation, the representative looked forward to the active exchange of research results among member States, and their translation into evidence-based conservation actions. The representative proceeded to suggest that the knowledge-sharing platform, which can be linked with the CBD Clearing-House Mechanism, is expected to serve as a model example of regional effort to implement the GBF. The representative was confident that the action plan would further strengthen transboundary cooperation in North-East Asia and lay a solid foundation for enhancing the subregional capacity in biodiversity conservation. The representative supported the adoption of the nature conservation activity plan for 2026, which is expected to make a tangible contribution to sustainable development in North-East Asia.

32. The representative of China congratulated the secretariat on the presentation on nature conservation. The representative informed of the progress on the big cat project conducted recently in China, and the progress of the creation of the Tiger and Leopard National Park in particular. The representative introduced the technologies comprehensively utilized in the national park, including field investigations, infrared cameras, drones, and satellite remote sensing, to establish the country's first sky-ground-integrated monitoring system with full coverage. The representative informed that, with the help of AI, the automatic ID system has identified 30 species, with the accuracy rate

exceeding 90%. The representative highlighted that the populations of wild Amur tigers and Amur leopards have continuously increased from 27 and 42 in 2015 to about 70 and 80 individuals, respectively. The representative also shared that the activity range of tigers and leopards expanded from deep mountainous areas to the shadow mountainous area near villagers, which affects the lives of local people. Regarding snow leopards, the representative informed that China has the largest distribution area of the species, which has been increasingly spotted in provinces of Qinghai, Sichuan, and Xinjiang. The representative highlighted that the perceived population of snow leopards and the status of their population survivals have been gradually improved, indicated by steady or increasing population in some survey areas, with the advancement of the field investigation equipment and further efforts over the recent years. The representative informed of the establishment of Qinghai-Tibet Conservation Alliance in October 2023, aiming to break down barriers between regions and departments and to promote in-depth communications and resources, also sharing knowledge among government experts and social organizations. The representative commented on the knowledge-sharing platform in the proposed activity plan and on the necessity of consulting member States in the course of its development.

33. The representative of Mongolia expressed appreciation for the presentation of the secretariat and commended the mutual passion for nature conservation among the member States and reported to the Meeting on several items, one of which was Mongolia's commitment to expanding its protected areas network by 30% by 2030. The delegate informed that Mongolia joined the Nature High Ambition Coalition for 30x30 and welcomed the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) to be endorsed and ratified by member States, considering the mandate and commitment of Mongolia for BBNJ. The representative further underscored the significance of joining BBNJ in committing to promoting more biodiversity and a beautiful environment and informed the Meeting on the recently concluded and compiled Mongolian National Red List, the report of which, including its threats and solutions, is now under consideration to be endorsed and to be officially introduced during the World Conservation Congress in Abu Dhabi in October 2025. The representative shared that Mongolia would like to have a pavilion next to the IUCN exhibition hall and invited member States to use it to organize side events or any other activities. The representative further introduced Mongolia's central topics, including umbrella species, biodiversity, flagship initiatives, migratory birds, connectivity conservation, ecological corridors, and nature-based solutions, which would gladly accommodate collaborative requests from the member States for the congress in Abu Dhabi. The representative concluded, mentioning renewable energy and its interference with nature conservation, which is posited as a very good solution to reduce GHG, but poses an impact, especially on migratory species. The representative recalled the opening statement by the State Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change of Mongolia, 'One Global Coalition', to introduce Nature-based Solutions for Sustainable Infrastructure, which Mongolia, as a host country, brings into consideration at UNCCD COP17. The representative informed that an objective of this initiative is to serve the Rio Convention, which can be one of the solutions that the government of Mongolia proposes on a global stage to solve the low footprint on nature.

Agenda item (c) Marine Protected Areas

34. The Meeting took note of the progress achieved by the North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas Network (NEAMPAN) under the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, including since SOM-27 including studies on Climate Change and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) for China and the Republic of Korea, respectively, finalized and to be published later this year. The Meeting acknowledged the progress in knowledge sharing and capacity building, including workshops, MPA talks, and the Expert Group Meeting on Marine Mammals, and took note of the further need to expand data sharing and formalize cooperation. The Meeting noted the progress of knowledge outreach activities, including the East Asia Seas Congress, High-Level Retreat on Investing in Ocean Solutions, and the 10th Our Ocean Conference. The Meeting reviewed and adopted the Activity Plan for marine protected areas in 2026.

35. The representative of the Republic of Korea noted the imminent release of NEAMPAN's climate vulnerability studies on marine protected areas in the Republic of Korea and China, which is expected to serve as useful guidance for future national priorities and site-level climate adaptation practices. The representative also welcomed the successful delivery of similar studies for other Member States in the future. Concerning the '30x30' target for marine protected areas, the representative underlined the significance of research, system establishment, and potential site identification for OECM aside from designating large-scale MPAs. Considering that the NEAMPAN activity plan for 2026 includes an OECM regional workshop, the representative conveyed anticipation that the first OECM workshop in 2026 to be a good opportunity to actively share experiences among the NEAMPAN member States on the development of OECM systems. The representative also raised questions for member States and the secretariat to consider the overlap between Nature Conservation and Marine Protected Areas, especially concerning the protected mammals in MPAs related to biodiversity. The representative advised the secretariat to effectively address these overlapping issues in preparing the new strategy plan for 2026-2030, which can either be integrated as one for the biodiversity or be kept as separate, with more differentiation for each area.

36. The representative of China looked forward to continuing efforts to strengthen NEAMPAN, expand its membership, and share successful experiences to jointly promote its development.

37. The representative of Mongolia proposed to include plastic pollution in marine protected areas as a preparatory action, in positive anticipation of the international treaty on plastic pollution being endorsed soon in 2026.

38. The secretariat acknowledged the importance of the link between Nature Conservation and Marine Protected Areas, and noted that the perspectives shared would be taken into consideration in its further discussions.

39. The representative of UNEP COBSEA congratulated the secretariat on the progress achieved in the past year. In terms of knowledge production, the representative introduced UNEP's work on integrating marine issues in NBSAPs and welcomed potential collaboration in this regard. Concerning the proposal to include marine litter from the representative of Mongolia, the representative shared COBSEA's work on marine litter and offered to share relevant knowledge and create a partnership to expand the regional statement if the secretariat is interested. The representative also welcomed joint actions in capacity building for OECMs and blue carbon, given

the interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change, with the secretariat. The representative concluded by sharing the ongoing work of COBSEA on a knowledge platform for the East Asian seas MPA networks, which also welcomes the identification of synergies with the work of NEASPEC and moving it forward together.

Agenda item (d) Low Carbon Cities

40. The Meeting acknowledged the progress of the North-East Asia Low Carbon Cities Platform (NEA-LCCP) activities, including the 5th International Forum on Low Carbon Cities on the demographic change with low carbon urban strategies, which created stronger linkages with the broader Asia-Pacific agenda, including review of SDG 11 and implementation of New Urban Agenda. The Meeting noted the knowledge dissemination activities, including the Youth Communications Production post, the 5th International Forum on Low Carbon Cities, and the NEA-LCCP network booklet. The Meeting reviewed and adopted the Activity Plan of Low Carbon Cities in 2026.

41. The representative of the Republic of Korea informed of the progress of continuous promotion of carbon neutrality across the country, which includes 226 local governments that independently formulated their first carbon neutrality action strategies in May, developing policies that reflect regional characteristics and residents' opinions, as well as plans developed to reduce GHG by more than 40% by 2030 compared to 2018 levels aligned with the national reduction target, provincial, and metropolitan goals for the majority of the local governments. The representative wished more cities and local municipalities would attend NEASPEC activities on low carbon cities. Regarding the North-East Asian Low-carbon City Platform booklet, the representative welcomed the prospect of the booklet effectively showcasing the activities of the NEA-LCCP in urban decarbonization and being disseminated in a well-planned and environmentally friendly manner to maximize its impact. The representative further welcomed the Pilot Low Carbon City Networks online platform to be an effective platform for sharing case studies, policy tools and city profiles after its expected launch in 2026.

42. The representative of China emphasized that cities are crucial areas for addressing climate change and affirmed the willingness of China to actively engage in dialogue, exchange, and practical cooperation with North-East Asian countries in low carbon cities. The representative also noted that closer communication among working-level representatives could further facilitate inter-city cooperation.

43. The representative of Russian Federation affirmed that the topic of low carbon cities remains a relevant and important area receiving significant attention in Russia, exemplified by national programs under the framework of Federal project Clean Air that aim to reduce the environmental impact. The representative mentioned the upcoming presentation on the goals and pathways for Project Clean Air on the 2nd NEACAP Policy Dialogue. The representative affirmed that increasing cooperation within the framework of NEASPEC is important to Russian Federation. The representative shared that the 6th International Low Carbon Cities Forum will be held in Moscow in 2026 and looked forward to demonstrating warm hospitality to the member States of NEASPEC.

44. The representative of Mongolia informed of several ongoing items of major progress in low carbon cities: (1) The Mongolian government has approved its NDC 3.0; (2) The Law of Climate Change produced by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change is expected to be approved in 2026. The representative expressed appreciation for the United Nations agencies that are implementing several projects, including the solar renewal project held in Chingeltei district which will be good for climate change and reducing carbon emission. The representative further noted that the draft law of climate change is expected to serve as a foundation and framework to promote climate change mitigation and adaptation and to accelerate cooperation among all stakeholders and partners with Mongolian entities.

Commented [VG1]: To be confirmed for the exact name.

Agenda item (e) Desertification and Land Degradation

45. The Meeting acknowledged the progress of NEASPEC on addressing desertification and land degradation (DLD), including preparations for a study on the main causes, drivers and impacts of DLD in North-East Asia. It also noted the subregional forum and workshop on DLD, which were planned to be jointly organized with the DLDD-NEAN secretariat and hosted by the Government of Mongolia. The Meeting reviewed and adopted the proposed activity plan for DLD in 2026.

46. The representative of Mongolia and the Republic of Korea requested the NEASPEC to incorporate sand and dust storms (SDS) and drought risk in its work on DLD, as these issues are closely related to DLD. The representative of China shared progress in addressing DLD, and highlighting the need for long-term tracking and further research on common ecological and environmental challenges in North-East Asia, to provide scientific and technological support for subregional network. The representative also stressed the importance for communication and collaboration in the subregion to build consensus and enhance the subregion's visibility on international platforms, including UNCCD COP17.

47. The representative of Mongolia presented Mongolia's plan for UNCCD COP17, highlighting partnership and legacy opportunities, as well as funding and financial cooperation as a developing country. The Meeting was also informed of the thematic planning of the COP17, which consists of Water Day, Land Day, Resilience Day, People Day, and Food and Agriculture Day, as well as planned initiatives on rangelands, water-land-forests, and nature-based solutions for infrastructure, urging member States to participate in these initiatives. The representative noted that the Conference is expected to draw over 10,000 participants from a wide range of stakeholders and will serve as a platform for partnerships and contributions to global environmental agendas. The representative expressed sincere and profound gratitude to NEASPEC member States for their support in addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in Mongolia, and requested their continued active support and contributions to UNCCD COP17.

48. The representative of the Northeast Asian Youth Climate Council expressed appreciation for NEASPEC's work on environmental cooperation in North-East Asia, particularly for addressing DLD. The representative also conveyed the willingness of youth representatives to support the organization of UNCCD COP17 within their capacity.

Agenda item 6. Review of the Core Fund and Project-based Fund

49. The Meeting was briefed on the expenditure of NEASPEC Core Fund since SOM-27, as well as the ongoing Project-based Fund. The Meeting noted the significant decrease in NEASPEC Core Fund as of 30 June 2025, highlighting the need for increased contributions to avoid serious challenges to NEASPEC operation beyond 2027. The Meeting also noted the secretariat's request for member States to increase contributions to the Core Fund or support seeking other funding opportunities, given the current financial trends. The Meeting considered the secretariat's proposed revised budget plan and result frameworks for 2026 to 2030, aligned with the Strategic Plan 2026-2030. The Meeting accepted the financial report.

50. The representative of the Republic of Korea informed that the Republic of Korea will make a voluntary contribution to the Core Fund later this year. Noting the financial challenges anticipated beyond 2027, the representative affirmed that the Republic of Korea will continue to support NEASPEC in effectively implementing the NEASPEC Strategic Plan for 2026-2030.

51. The representative of China affirmed that China will continue making contributions to the Core Fund. The representative emphasized that contributions of member States should remain voluntary, and that the use of the Fund should remain transparent and guided by the member States.

52. The secretariat expressed appreciation for the continued support from member States, noting its efforts to conserve funds wherever possible and to utilize other funding sources for NEASPEC activities. The secretariat also affirmed that it will actively seek additional funding opportunities, while continuing discussions with the member States.

Agenda item 7. Review of Draft NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2026-2030

53. The Meeting noted the development process of the NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2026-2030. Aligned with the revision guidance from the member States during SOM-27, the Meeting noted the highlights of thematic relevance and result-based management, underscoring the revised Strategic Plan 2026-2030. The Meeting was briefed on the partnership-oriented, capacity-building based, data-driven, and synergy-seeking approach, which would also ensure broader coverage of experts and nationalities in the subregion. The Meeting reviewed and adopted the draft NEASPEC Strategic Plan 2026-2030.

54. The representative of China expressed appreciation of the detailed presentation from the secretariat and shared one comment on page 19, point 4.5 of the Strategic Plan 2026-2030, as shared previously via email, that the objective of Marine Protected Areas be revised as 'By 2030, NEAMPAN's role is recognized as a key platform for enhancing partnerships among MPAs and stakeholders and expanding members of NEAMPAN sites.'

55. The representative of Mongolia expressed appreciation of the presentation and referred to a previous discussion, which mentioned four subregional environmental mechanisms that share the same membership of NEASPEC. The representative raised the question of how to leverage the key thematic areas to promote more subregional environmental mechanisms. The delegate proceeded to highlight the joint efforts required to tackle the environmental challenges, including those undertaken through the GTI Environmental Board, the CICA Central Asian Trust-Building Mechanism, as well as broader Asia-Europe cooperation in the areas of climate change, biodiversity, and decentralization. The representative emphasized the need to initiate a detailed discussion during the upcoming SOM-29 or SOM-30, stressing the need to discuss how these mechanisms can differentiate or merge to increase efficiency.

56. The representative shared some personal views that the world has drastically changed from 1~2 years ago in mobilizing resources for environmental benefit and noted that fundraising has become more difficult for environmental projects as soon as the United States of America exited the Paris agreement. With challenges mounting up, the representative urged to prioritize discussion before commitment, recalling the objective of SOM in updating and approving the work of the secretariat, rather than discussing mandated topics, brainstorming, or reaching consensus. The delegate proceeded to request a separate discussion on the Strategic Plan 2026-2030, if allowed under the budget, involving stakeholders from the member States, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Economy and Development, Minister of Environment, and more government officials to discuss how countries view NEASPEC in the future.

57. The representative informed that the Mongolian presidency for the UNCCD COP17 will last until the end of 2028 and ensured that Mongolia may be ready to take the lead on Desertification and Land Degradation within NEASPEC, which is already approved by the minister and discussed with ambassadors of the NEASPEC member States. The representative recalled the earlier intervention by the representative of the Republic of Korea on merging or further differentiating nature conservation and marine protected areas concerning the marine species and requested the secretariat to organize another event which invites more relevant ministries to the conversation and discuss how NEASPEC can be shaped.

58. The representative also called for attention on several items that are not touched, some of which the subregional office takes leading action on: sand and dust storm, which is not under DLD; and plastic pollution, which needs to be discussed, especially once the plastics treaty is endorsed. The representative shared that Mongolia continues to make contributions to each international multilateral mechanism, although it may not be as much as the amount made by other member States. The representative concluded her intervention by highlighting the importance of discussion of issues within the mandated focal points.

59. Mr. Sangmin Nam, Director of the Environment and Development Division (EDD) of ESCAP, expressed appreciation for the partnership of NEASPEC member countries and stakeholder groups. He noted that NEASPEC's strategic areas and approaches are increasingly aligned with regional programmes and actions, thereby complementing each other. Mr. Nam emphasized that NEASPEC has great potential to become a key driver of strengthened regional cooperation in Asia and the Pacific,

with its progress and outcomes further contributing to this objective. He then elaborated on the specific connections between the work of NEASPEC and the broader regional programme. On Air Pollution, Mr. Nam informed that the development of NEACAP as a fully functioning platform for strategic and effective cooperation will support the Regional Action Program on Air Pollution (RAPAP), which was negotiated and adopted in 2022. He further explained that RAPAP will, in turn, support the continued development of NEACAP through its partnership and coordination platform. On Low Carbon Cities, Mr. Nam pointed out the annual activities, analytical work, and further development of a low-carbon city partnership are directly linked with the regional partnership for implementing the next NDC or NDC 3.0 at the city level, which the EDD is currently working on, further strengthening and supporting the implementation of NEA-LCCP. Regarding Desertification and Land Degradation and Biodiversity, Mr. Nam underscored that their respective goals and plans to capacitate assessing, monitoring, and managing desertification and land degradation, as well as implementing national biodiversity strategies, will have direct synergies with the ongoing and emerging regional partnership on nature-based solutions. On Marine Protected Areas, Mr. Nam stated that its goal for strengthening MPA management effectiveness and enhancing biodiversity conservation, including climate resilience, are mutually supportive of the regional ocean-based climate action initiative which was adopted last year. Mr. Nam also noted that the regional ocean-based climate action initiative engages in blue carbon ecosystems which has a direct linkage with the ongoing NEAMPAN work.

60. Mr. Nam emphasized that the thematic priorities are strongly interlinked which will be of direct contribution to the key agenda of the forthcoming Committee on Environment and Development, to be held in July next year. Recalling the intervention by the delegation of Japan, which informed that ESCAP, UNEP, ADB and IGES are jointly preparing the Asia-Pacific Synergy Report to promote a synergetic approach to addressing planetary crises and advancing sustainable development, Mr. Nam underlined that this report would serve as a key reference in shaping new regional partnership on synergies. In this regard, he highlighted that the work of NEASPEC will directly contribute to the ongoing development of the regional synergy report and its related programmes.

G. Venue, date and provisional agenda of the Twenty-Ninth Senior Officials Meeting (Agenda item 8)

61. The Meeting discussed the venue, date, and agenda of the Twenty-Ninth Session of the Senior Officials Meeting of NEASPEC. The Meeting expressed appreciation to the Government of the Russian Federation for generously offering to host the next session. The proposed date, venue and the provisional agenda will be announced in due course, in consultation with the member States and the secretariat.

H. Other Issues (Agenda item 9)

62. The Meeting expressed its deep appreciation to the Government of Mongolia for generously hosting the Twenty-Eighth Session of the Senior Officials Meeting with warm hospitality and excellent arrangements, and to the secretariat for the excellent preparation of the Meeting.

63. The representative of Mongolia informed that the UNCCD COP 17 will be held from 17 to 28 August 2026. He further noted that, immediately following UNCCD COP 17, the government of Mongolia would need to report to the UN General Assembly and subsequently attend the UNCBD COP in Armenia in October, followed by the UNFCCC COP in the last two weeks of November. The representative outlined these events with the hope that they would be taken into account when proposing the date for SOM-29.

I. Adoption of the Report (Agenda item 10)

64. The Meeting adopted the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Senior Officials Meeting on 23 September 2025. The report of the Meeting was finalized and adopted by circulating it among the member States after the Senior Officials Meeting.

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