

UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC  
**THE 15<sup>TH</sup> SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING (SOM) OF NEASPEC**  
Tokyo, 17-18 March 2010

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The Meeting exchanged information on national initiatives<sup>1</sup> relevant to NEASPEC and views on the significance of NEASPEC as a comprehensive vehicle for the subregion to jointly promote environmental cooperation and sustainable development through the exchange of experience and knowledge and the implementation of tangible activities. In this regard, the Meeting noted the significance of developing concrete activities based on the common interests of member countries and through proper consultations with the member governments.

2. **Project on Nature Conservation in Transboundary Areas:** The Meeting noted the significant relevance of the project to addressing national and subregional challenges concerning nature conservation and protecting the flagship species identified by the nature conservation strategy of NEASPEC. The Meeting expressed its appreciation to the Government of the Russian Federation for the financial contribution to the project. The Meeting also noted the significance of support from the respective government in the process of planning and implementation. For the smooth commencement of the project, the Meeting invited the member countries to inform the Secretariat of the nominated national implementing agency by 31 March 2010.

3. **Project on Mitigation of Transboundary Air Pollution from Coal-fired Power Plants:** The Meeting was informed by the ADB representative that the project will be immediately implemented as major institutional arrangements have been finalized. The Meeting noted the need for further consultation between the ADB and the Government of Mongolia to prepare the institutional arrangement of the project in Mongolia.

4. The Meeting noted the proposal of the Russian Federation to develop an additional

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<sup>1</sup>The information of national initiatives is included under the Agenda Item 4 on Environmental and Development Policies and Issues of NEASPEC in the Proceedings.

activity in the context of transboundary air pollution. The Meeting invited the Russian Federation to communicate with the Secretariat with a more detailed proposal by 10 April 2010, upon which the Secretariat should facilitate further consultations among the member countries on the project.

**5. Project on the Mitigation of Dust and Sandstorms:** The Meeting invited the Governments of China and Mongolia to formally communicate with the Secretariat about the nomination of the national implementing agency as soon as possible and invited other member countries to nominate national institutes/ focal points for the project. The Meeting noted the need for the project to collaborate with existing bilateral and multilateral initiatives among member countries concerning dust and sandstorms.

**6. Eco-efficiency Partnership:** The Meeting was informed of the conclusion and recommendation of the Expert Group Meeting on Eco-Efficiency Partnership, held prior to the SOM. The Meeting took note of the conclusion and recommendation, and requested the Secretariat to revise the plan of the Partnership accordingly.

**7. Issues Concerning the Institutional Arrangement of NEASPEC:** The Meeting reviewed the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on the new ESCAP Subregional Offices held in early March 2010, in Bangkok, and recommended that the operational functions of interim secretariat of NEASPEC will be carried out by the ESCAP Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia in Incheon.

**8. Core Fund:** The Meeting approved the review and planning of the Core Fund and expressed its appreciation to the Government of China for the annual contribution to the Core Fund. While approving the allocation of requested financial resources for the programme planning and management from July 2010 – June 2012, the Meeting invited the member countries to provide any suggestions concerning activities under each proposed component, and requested the Secretariat to revise the document accordingly. The Meeting also requested the Secretariat to explore other financial sources and the member countries for strengthened contribution to the Core Fund.

**9. The Sixteenth SOM:** The Meeting received the proposal of the Government of the Republic of Korea for hosting the 16<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting of NEASPEC. The venue, exact dates and the provisional agenda will be decided through further consultations and announced in due course. The Meeting invited the member countries to communicate with

the Secretariat on the potential topic of the 16<sup>th</sup> SOM and EGM to be held together with the SOM.

10. The Meeting expressed sincere gratitude to the Government of Japan for generously hosting the Meeting and for its warm hospitality and excellent arrangements made for the Meeting. The Meeting also expressed gratitude to the Secretariat for the arrangement of the SOM.

### **PROCEEDINGS OF THE 15<sup>th</sup> SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING**

11. The 15<sup>th</sup> SOM of NEASPEC was held on 18 March 2010 in Tokyo, Japan. The Meeting was organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and generously hosted by the Ministry of Environment, Japan. Prior to the SOM, Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on Eco-efficiency Partnership was held on 17 March 2010.

#### **A. Attendance**

12. The Meeting was attended by delegations of China, Japan, Mongolia, Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation, and a representative of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

#### **B. Opening session**

13. The Senior Officials Meeting was opened by Mr. Masakazu ICHIMURA, Chief, Environment and Development Policy Section, Environment and Development Division of ESCAP. At the outset, Mr. Ichimura expressed his sincere appreciation to the Government of Japan for generously hosting this important meeting and welcomed delegates and experts from the member countries. He informed the meeting of the immediate commencement of new NEASPEC projects on transboundary air pollution, nature conservation in transboundary areas, dust and sandstorms, and underlined the significance of new suggestions from member countries at the Expert Group Meeting held prior to the SOM regarding the approach of the Eco-efficiency Partnership. He considered the recent progress in the establishment of the ESCAP Subregional Office (SRO) for North-East Asia as new momentum for NEASPEC to strengthen its activities with better human resources.

14. Mr. Takashi OMURA, Ministry of the Environment of Japan, delivered a welcoming remark. At the outset, he extended his appreciation to ESCAP for intensive work for this meeting. He noted environmental challenges confronting the NEASPEC member countries while the countries have made immense achievements in economic and social development. In this regard, he emphasized the need to undertake cooperative efforts and measures beyond those that the countries have undertaken at domestic levels, and requested all countries to work together in implementing NEASPEC projects for more tangible results.

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

15. The Meeting elected officers as follows: Mr. Takashi OMURA (Japan) as the Chair, Yeon-chul YOO (Republic of Korea) as the Vice Chair and Ms. Irina B. FOMINYKH (Russian Federation) as the Rapporteur.

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

16. The Meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Election of officers
3. Adoption of agenda
4. Environment and development policies and issues of NEASPEC
5. Review of programme planning and implementation
  - (a) Nature Conservation in Transboundary Areas
  - (b) Mitigation of Transboundary Air Pollution from Coal-Fired Power Plants in North-East Asia
  - (c) Mitigation of Dust and Sandstorms
  - (d) Eco-efficiency Partnership in North-East Asia
6. Consideration of new NEASPEC project proposals
7. Review of issues concerning the institutional arrangement of NEASPEC
8. Review of the Core Fund
9. Venue, date and provisional agenda of the 16<sup>th</sup> SOM
10. Other matters
11. Adoption of the conclusion and recommendation of the meeting

**E. Environment and development policies and issues of the North-East Asian Subregional  
Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC)  
(Item 4 of the agenda)**

17. The representative of China, Mr. LU Kang, Deputy Director General, Department of International Organizations and Conferences, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, outlined the Government's sustainable development strategy which focuses on the development of ecological civilization with the establishment of an energy- and resource-efficient and environment-friendly economy, and introduced efforts of the Government to make environmental protection and sustainable growth as a strong impetus to transforming economic growth pattern, and to respond to climate change by setting national targets, policies and measures for mitigating greenhouse gases emissions by 2020. Concerning the role of NEASPEC, he stated that China attaches great importance to NEASPEC, as a unique platform for all the six North-East Asian countries to promote cooperation on environment and development issues and affirmed the Government's readiness to strengthen cooperation with other member countries to achieve more tangible outcomes of NEASPEC, thereby contributing to the sustainable development and people's well-being of the North-East Asian Subregion. In this regard, he underscored the need of NEASPEC to pay more attention to the development issue through facilitating cooperation among member countries to strengthen capacity for sustainable development, thus contributing to the agenda of the 6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific to be held in Kazakhstan this year.

18. The representative of Japan, Mr. Takashi OMURA, Director, Environmental Cooperation Office, Global Environment Bureau, Ministry of the Environment, highlighted the efforts of the Government for climate change, biodiversity and mercury. He noted that addressing climate change requires a fair and effective mechanism for all countries and introduced the plan of the Japanese Government to support mitigation action in developing countries through the Hatoyama Initiative and strengthening domestic measures by enacting a new bill on global warming that requires preparing the national plan to combat climate change and reform existing laws in line with the new bill. Concerning biodiversity conservation, he requested the support of the NEASPEC member countries for the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to the CBD to be held in October 2010 in Nagoya, the Satoyama Initiative for protecting biodiversity, and the international process for the Intergovernmental Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). With regard to mercury management, he briefed the plan of a global legally-binding mechanism for controlling mercury and the active contribution of Japan to the process, and requested active

participation of all NEASPEC countries in the process by including the NEASPEC project on transboundary air pollution from coal-fired power plants, a key source of mercury emissions. Furthermore, he noted the need to have productive discussions between NEASPEC and the Tripartite Environmental Ministers' Meeting (TEMM) regarding dust and sandstorms and transboundary air pollution.

**19.** The representative of Mongolia, Ms. Tsengel NERGUI, Climate Change Officer, Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism, briefed major challenges of poverty reduction, human development, economic crisis and climate change that hinder efforts for sustainable development. She highlighted the new initiatives of the Government for addressing climate change through the recent establishment of the Climate Change Coordination Office; the start of revising the national programme on climate change through two Working Groups on adaptation and mitigation, respectively; the development of the national adaptation strategy; the execution of a public awareness media programme; and the development of new laws on soil protection and prevention from desertification and pasture land. Concerning the heavy reliance of the Mongolian economy on mining, she summarized the efforts of the Government to mitigate its environmental impacts by strengthening legal measures.

**20.** The representative of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Yeon-chul YOO, Deputy Director General, International Economic Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, noted the achievement of NEASPEC as a useful consultation channel among NEASPEC member countries and as a unique environmental body in North-East Asia, and the significant role of the Core Fund as a key financial source of activities. However, he underlined the need to review the role of NEASPEC and the secretariat arrangement taking into account the new situation in relation to the establishment of the ESCAP Subregional Office (SRO). In this regard, he proposed establishing the secretariat at the Incheon SRO, thereby gaining the momentum of NEASPEC for its work on sustainable development including green growth, and expressed his expectation for the 15<sup>th</sup> SOM to restart and revitalize NEASPEC.

**21.** The representative of the Russian Federation, Ms. Irina B. FOMINYKH, Deputy Director, Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation, briefed the main goals and principles of the state policy on environmental protection which includes ensuring the stability of ecosystems and their maintenance in sustainable and balanced condition; building environmentally-oriented economy characterized by minimal negative environmental impact, low resource capacity and high energy efficiency; and developing favorable environmental conditions as a factor of improving the human environment. In this context, she highlighted key measures for

enhancing energy and ecological efficiency of economy through improving the efficiency in key sectors including energy, construction, transport, housing and communal services; elaborating standards for permissible impact on environment; and promoting energy efficient and environmentally friendly technologies. Furthermore, she briefed the policy priorities of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, which include mitigation of environmental impact by reduction of anthropogenic pressures; reduction and elimination of administrative barriers and corruption capacity in nature protection activity; system development of specially protected natural territories of federal significance; enforcement of national compliance with international agreements and protection of national interests; and raising environmental awareness of the public, degree of participation of civil society in shaping and implementing environmental policies. Concerning the implementation of the project on nature conservation in transboundary areas, she informed the SOM that the Government nominated the Centre for International Projects as the national implementing agency.

**F. Presentations and discussions on substantive agenda items  
(Item 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the agenda)**

**22.** The Meeting had presentations from the secretariat on Agenda Item 5: Review of programme planning and implementation; Agenda Item 6: Consideration of new NEASPEC proposals; Agenda Item 7: Review of issues concerning the institutional arrangement of NEASPEC; and Agenda Item 8: Review of the Core Fund. The Meeting subsequently had considerable discussions after presentation on each agenda item. The conclusions and recommendations of discussions are included in the Report of the Meeting.

**23.** Concerning Agenda Item 5(d), the Meeting took note of the following conclusions and recommendations of the EGM on Eco-efficiency Partnership:

- Concerning the overall approach of NEASPEC, the EGM recommended that NEASPEC should pay more attention to the broad policy issues for sustainable development.
- The EGM supported the three thematic areas of the Eco-efficiency Partnership and proposed sustainable infrastructure and building under the component of Urban Governance Partnership and circular economy under the component of Public-Private-Civil Society Partnership to be priority areas of joint action. Furthermore, the EGM recommended the promotion of environmental/recycling industry as a concrete area of joint action in the context of circular economy. In this regard, it was suggested to organize an EGM on the topics in 2011 with the consideration of available financial

resources, and that the secretariat communicates with member countries for specific arrangement of the EGM.

- The EGM recommended developing concrete pilot projects endorsed by the SOM and following proper national communication channels for engaging national institutions.
- The EGM noted that any future activities on energy efficiency standard and carbon footprint initiative should focus on information-sharing and capacity building for experts.
- The EGM recommended that the Secretariat should seek close collaboration with other relevant divisions in ESCAP in order to properly carry out NEASPEC activities.

24. Regarding the agenda item 8, the delegation of China announced that the Government will continue to make the annual contributions of US\$50,000 to the Core Fund in 2010.

#### **G. Venue, date and provisional agenda of the sixteenth SOM (Agenda Item 9)**

25. The Meeting discussed the venue, date and agenda of the 16<sup>th</sup> SOM. The Meeting expressed its appreciation to the Government of Republic of Korea for generously offering to host the next Meeting to be held April or May 2011. The proposed dates and venue, and provisional agenda will be announced by the secretariat in consultation with the host government in due course.

#### **H. Other matters (Item 10 of the agenda)**

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

#### **I. Adoption of the Report (Item 11 of the agenda)**

27. The Meeting adopted the conclusions and recommendations of the SOM on 18 March 2010. The Report of the Meeting was finalized and adopted through circulation among the member countries after the SOM.

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