

3 . 開会挨拶(英文)

韓国環境省環境部 申富南部長

Welcome Remarks

By Boonam Shin

Director General

International Cooperation Office

Ministry of Environment

Republic of Korea

March 14, 2007

Honorable representatives, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I'm Bu-Nam Shin, Director-General of International Cooperation Office, the Ministry of Environment, the Republic of Korea.

First of all, I would like to congratulate you on the opening of the 15th Northeast Asian Conference on Environmental Cooperation (NEAC) here in this beautiful city "Ecopolis" Ulsan, in March when spring arrives and everything is beginning to come back to life. It's my honor and privilege for me to be given this opportunity to speak at this Conference.

In recent years, the Northeast Asian region where we live has faced diverse environmental challenges and problems caused by the rapid economic growth, such as air and marine pollution, desertification, increasing Northeast Asian Dust and Sand Storms (DSS), as well as decreasing biological diversity, hazardous waste generation, and chemical pollution.

This environmental degradation and pollution has a negative impact on human health, forest ecosystems, and the marine environment in diverse ways. Its damage is not limited to a single country but greatly influences geographically-close countries.

For this reason, the importance of regional cooperation is coming to the fore.

Furthermore, many countries shed light on the importance of governmental channels for international environmental cooperation to encourage Northeast Asian countries to join the efforts to address environmental pollution.

As you are aware, many interested parties from Korea, China, Japan, Mongolia and Russia have participated in the NEAC since its inception in 1992 to exchange information on environmental issues and major policies.

As a result, NEACs have made a great contribution to the promotion of environmental cooperation among Northeast Asian countries, and consequently, to the launch of the Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting (TEMM) among Korea, China, and Japan in 1999, through information sharing on environmentally-friendly policies, raising public awareness of environmental conservation, as well as establishing the atmosphere of international environmental cooperation.

However, on the other hand, some doubts are being raised over the effectiveness of NEACs. Therefore, I think the five countries need to discuss in depth on developing the Conference to have a pivotal role to play in addressing the growing environmental problems in Northeast Asia.

I think this occasion is very significant and timely for all of us to share our views on the strategy for future NEACs. I hope sincere dialogues between participating countries could lead to tangible results.

In closing, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all representatives from the State Environment Protection Administration of China, the Ministry of the Environment of Japan, and the Ministry of Nature and Environment of Mongolia for participating in the 15th NEAC and to our staff for sparing no efforts to prepare for this conference.

Thank you