

TEMM4

Seoul, Republic of Korea (April 20–21, 2002)



1. At the invitation of Minister KIM Myung-Ja of the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea, Minister XIE Zhenhua of the State Environmental Protection Administration of the People's Republic of China and Minister OHKI Hiroshi of the Ministry of the Environment of Japan visited Seoul, where they held the fourth Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting (TEMM) from April 20 to 21, 2002. On this occasion, the Ministers paid a courtesy call to H.E. Prime Minister LEE Hang Dong.

2. The Ministers exchanged views on the progress made in the field of environment in their respective countries and in the Northeast Asian region. They noted with pleasure that the TEMM and its activities received high regard at the Trilateral Meeting of the Leaders of China, Japan and Korea in last November in Brunei.

3. The Ministers observed that environmental protection will be key to shaping the course of the 21st century. In this vein, they anticipated that the international community will make significant efforts to achieve sustainable development. The Ministers communicated their intention to contribute to these efforts and agreed that providing information on TEMM to other regional and global environmental meetings would prove valuable to the international environmental endeavor. They shared the view that for this purpose, strengthening of linkages with other Northeast Asian environmental programmes is necessary.

4. The Ministers reviewed the implementation status of the projects

formulated under the five priority areas identified at the second TEMM. They commended the constructive work of last year's Roundtable Meeting on Environmental Industry and the Joint Environmental Training Project, and appraised the ongoing projects on freshwater pollution prevention, TEMM website, environmental education network and ecological conservation in Northwest China. Expressing their desire to see all the TEMM activities bear fruitful results, the Ministers shared the view that strengthening of TEMM organizational and financial mechanisms is important.

5. The Ministers also discussed various issues of common concern. Discussions covered both global issues such as the preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), climate change and biodiversity, and regional issues like sand dust (yellow sand or kosa) and ecological conservation in Northwest China. They expressed their willingness to strengthen cooperation on recycling-based economy and society. In addition, they commended China's successful hosting of the first Asia-Europe Environment Ministers Meeting in Beijing last January, and welcomed Korea's offer to host the 8th Special Session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environmental Forum of the UNEP in 2004.

6. In regards to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Ministers recognized the historical significance it carries in the global efforts to revive the environment. The Ministers observed that China, Japan and Korea should make constructive contributions to the process and have regional considerations integrated into the final outcome. In particular, they shared the view that TEMM is an outstanding model of regional cooperation among the countries with different economic and social conditions. They hence agreed to forward the activities of TEMM to the Summit process. The Ministers underscored the importance of incorporating environmental considerations into the development schemes of Asian countries, and maintained that the Summit should serve as an opportunity to highlight this issue. Lastly, they pointed out that continual stakeholder dialogues among the three countries are essential for the success of

the WSSD and sustainable development.

7. The Ministers noted with appreciation the continuous efforts of the three countries to address climate change which is a pressing issue requiring global participation. Reaffirming that the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol provide the framework for international cooperation and represent the important first step of human efforts on this issue, they maintained that domestic and international efforts should be strengthened to combat climate change in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities. The Ministers also reiterated their expectation to see the Protocol enter into force in 2002, bearing in mind the timing of WSSD.

8. The Ministers expressed their concern about the ecological deterioration in Northeast Asia. They paid special attention to the recent outbreak of sandstorm (yellow sand or kosa), which has become exacerbated by droughts and land degradation. Recognizing the efficacy of TEMM projects in improving ecological conditions, they agreed that focus should be placed on promoting environmental management capacity of the three countries through such measures as environmental seminars, training and scientific research activities. The Ministers also recognized the need to strengthen monitoring capacity to combat sandstorms. Finally, they stressed the importance of extensive engagement of national environmental administrations in the region and international organizations like UNEP and Global Environment Facility (GEF) in the efforts to cope with the challenges arising from sandstorm.

9. Regarding air pollution, the Ministers noted that acid deposition is a serious problem faced by China, Japan and Korea. Reaffirming their commitment to actively promote the activities of the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET), they stressed that enhancing its activities including research, quality assurance & quality control programs and strengthening the basis of EANET are important. In the area of air pollution management, the Ministers appreciated the progress of the joint research project on long-range transboundary air

pollutants (LTP), and commended the proactive roles of the Northeast Asian Subregional Programme of Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) and the Northeast Asian Center for Environmental Data and Training (NEACEDT). However, they observed that air pollution still remains a formidable problem in Northeast Asia, with the transportation sector making increasingly significant impact on the environment. Taking note of the fact that transportation sector is making increasing contribution to air pollution, greenhouse gas concentration in the atmosphere and to noise and vibration problems, the Ministers agreed that studies should be conducted to explore measures for environmentally sustainable transportation, including the promotion of environmentally friendly modes of transportation and infrastructure.

10. Concerning water management, the Ministers recognized the vital importance of securing reliable freshwater sources and preserving water environment in realizing global sustainability. In this regard, they welcomed the prevailing view of the global community on the importance of freshwater issues in the WSSD preparation process. The Ministers agreed that the three countries should collaborate closely to contribute to the success of the Third World Water Forum in 2003.

11. In the area of marine pollution, the Ministers appreciated the the outcome on the establishment of Regional Coordination Unit (RCU) at the seventh Intergovernmental Meeting of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP), held in March 2002. They maintained that the early set up of RCU is crucial to facilitating the implementation of NOWPAP projects.

12. In the field of biological diversity, the Ministers recognized that habitat protection is critical to sustaining our ecological treasures. Particularly, they shared the view that wetlands constitute an important habitat, providing sanctuaries to rare fauna and flora, including endangered wildlife and various migratory birds. The Ministers consented to promote active exchange of information on the

status of wetlands and their conservation and restoration efforts.

13. The Ministers decided that the next TEMM will be held in China. The date and venue will be proposed by the host country and confirmed by the other parties. The Ministers also agreed to meet on the sidelines of international forums attended by all three Ministers. Finally, they shared the view that they should discuss matters relating to enhancing the TEMM framework and promoting its activities at future meetings.

14. The Ministers expressed their satisfaction with the friendly atmosphere and the fruitful conclusions of this year's meeting. Minister XIE Zhenhua and Minister OHKI Hiroshi expressed their gratitude to Minister KIM Myung-Ja and the Korean government for their warm welcome and generous hospitality.