

**The Fifteenth Asia-Pacific Seminar on Climate Change
11- 15 September 2005, Yokohama, Kanagawa, Japan
Chairperson's Summary**

1. The Fifteenth Asia-Pacific Seminar on Climate Change was held in Yokohama, Kanagawa, Japan on 11- 15 September 2005. The Seminar was jointly organized by the Ministry of the Environment, Japan (MOEJ), the Australian Greenhouse Office (AGO), the New Zealand Climate Change Office, the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Kanagawa Prefecture, Yokohama City, and the Overseas Environmental Cooperation Center, Japan (OECC). Since its commencement in 1991, the Seminar has become well recognized as a major regional effort to address climate change and acted as a progressive vehicle for information exchange and mutual understanding among the countries through providing a useful framework for international cooperation in this field. In this context, the organization of the Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop on Art. 6 of the UNFCCC in conjunction with the Seminar was appreciated.

I. Attendance

2. The Seminar was attended by experts from twenty-eight (28) countries, and representatives of several UN and other organizations. A number of resource persons from research institutes, universities and private companies also attended the Seminar.

II. Themes

3. The goal of the Seminar is to facilitate exchange of views, experiences and best practices on climate change-related efforts in the Asia-Pacific region. For the 15th Seminar, participants focused on three themes based on recommendations of the 14th Seminar: co-benefits of greenhouse gas (GHG) mitigation, clean development mechanism (CDM), and adaptation to climate change.

III. Conduct of the Seminar

4. The Seminar commenced with opening addresses by Mr. Toshiro Kojima, Vice Minister for Global Environmental Affairs, MOEJ, and Mr. Janos Pasztor, Coordinator, Sustainable Development Programme, UNFCCC.

5. The Seminar elected Dr. Ancha Srinivasan, Principal Researcher and Manager, Climate Change Policy Project, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) as the Chairperson. Mr. Taka Hiraishi, Senior Consultant, IGES, Dr. Kok Seng Yap, Deputy Director General, Malaysian Meteorological Service Department, and Mr. James Shevlin, Head, International and Strategies Branch, AGO chaired sessions of the Seminar.

IV. Substantive Sessions

Opening Session

6. The Chairperson of the Seminar and the Conference Secretariat explained the key features and expected outcomes, which provided a foundation for substantive discussion, and relevant inputs to the Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop on Art. 6 of the Convention.

Co-benefits of GHG Mitigation

7. There is a general consensus on the desirability of adopting a co-benefits approach in implementation of GHG mitigation measures in the region. Adopting such an approach can increase public awareness, mobilize additional resources, and promote the on-ground implementation activities in different sectors. The participants recognized, however, the need for developing tools and methods to identify and assess co-benefits, including quantification in economic terms. The Integrated Environmental Strategies (IES) Programme of the US Environment Protection Agency and the Clean Air Initiative for Asian Cities (CAI-Asia) are good examples of a co-benefit approach to demonstrate potential synergies between GHG mitigation and air quality management.

8. Many participants suggested that potential co-benefits should be included as a factor in consideration and assessment of all GHG projects and policies, including the CDM.

9. The Seminar felt a particular need for addressing co-benefits in energy efficiency and transportation sectors, where significant opportunities were identified. Harmonization of approaches (e.g., reporting formats) and methods in evaluation and communication of co-benefits in such sectors is considered useful.

10. Exchange of experiences between the climate change and air quality management communities and compilation of joint best practices are considered paramount for replication of efforts on co-benefits in the region. Networking at various levels – international, national and local – in different sectors should be pursued to drive forward the efforts on realizing co-benefits.

11. Capacity building and awareness raising are considered crucial. Since sectors related to GHG mitigation are not always aware of such co-benefit potential, well-targeted and tailor-made awareness raising activities in such sectors may prove efficient.

12. In order to facilitate the above efforts, it is vital to identify and encourage relevant organizations in the region with a view to mobilizing resources and providing methodological inputs.

Clean Development Mechanism

13. Participants identified several institutional, financial and capacity building-related barriers in CDM implementation in the region and offered several suggestions to overcome them.

14. The Seminar recognized the need for improving current CDM process, especially in relation to speeding up the decision making steps of the CDM Executive Board and its Panels, and eventual streamlining of CDM process itself without jeopardizing environmental integrity. Such improvement is considered crucial to optimize the positive impacts of CDM on sustainable development of host countries in the region. High priority must be given to developing additional methodologies in both energy efficiency and transport sectors in order to widen the diversity of CDM sectors supported, and to explore larger benefits from CDM projects in the region.

15. Participants noted that uncertainty of continuity of CDM beyond 2012, and the fast approaching registration deadline of 31 December 2005 for projects considering to derive Certified Emission Reductions (CER) from activities commenced after 1 January 2000 are causing a serious reluctance to development of CDM projects. Many presenters identified the multiple benefits of CDM to sustainable development besides contributions to the global climate mitigation, and urged early initiation of discussions on CDM-type scheme in the subsequent commitment period to sustain interest of participants (investors and hosts) in CDM projects.

16. Taxation on CER or imposition of administrative fees and other procedures are considered the prerogative of host countries. However, information sharing on such procedures is considered important for attracting investment. The Seminar also noted the need for transparency and removing complexities in CDM approval procedures, if any, in host countries. Some participants expressed that well-defined criteria for sustainable development, and a timely and reasonably simple approval process may encourage investment in CDM projects by Annex I Parties. For smooth implementation of CDM projects, development as well as retention of capacity in Designated National Authority (DNA) of host countries is considered crucial.

17. Participants suggested the need for additional financial support by Annex I Parties for promotion of CDM in the region. In this context, the Upfront Payment Program and Kyoto Credit Purchase Scheme under the Japan Kyoto Mechanisms Acceleration Program drew much attention.

18. One stop shop for CDM information in host countries may be of great help to both project developers and investors. In raising awareness, information dissemination in local languages is considered useful. The role of media in disseminating accurate and targeted information on potential benefits of CDM projects is recognized as an important factor, especially to obtain good support from local stakeholders. The Seminar also noted the need for demonstrating successful projects and disseminating appropriate information to accelerate CDM implementation.

19. CDM activities to date in the region contributed to awareness raising and active involvement of local communities in climate efforts. One possible way for promoting further regional cooperation is to provide opportunities for exchange of information among officials of DNA in the region.

Adaptation to Climate Change

20. Strengthening human and institutional capacities on sector-based vulnerability assessment is considered important in promoting adaptation efforts in the region. The Seminar recognized the need for developing more refined vulnerability assessment methods such as downscaling models with higher resolution. The uncertainty in prediction of timing, location and magnitude of extreme climate events continues to be a big challenge for addressing adaptation to climate change.

21. Participants noted difficulties in differentiating the impacts of short term climate variability and long term climate change. In order to enhance the effectiveness of adaptation, it is suggested that a risk management approach is used to identify initial target sectors and regions. As a practical step, each country is suggested to prioritize areas and sectors of major concern for addressing adaptation, taking into account the practical feasibility and resource constraints in specific time-frames. Participants benefited from early experiences of Vanuatu, India, Australia and other countries in implementing several planned adaptation strategies.

22. A multi-pronged approach for mainstreaming adaptation in development at local, national and international levels is considered useful. Participants noted the need for considering climate change adaptation concerns in assessment of all projects and policies, including development assistance.

23. Participants noted the need for further clarification on adaptation provisions in the Convention with a view to conceptualizing a more comprehensive and definite approach on adaptation similar to that on mitigation. The SBSTA (Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice)'s 5-year programme of work on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change under the Buenos Aires Programme of Work on Adaptation and Response Measures is expected to contribute towards such efforts. Participants noted that continued assistance by developed countries in adaptation efforts of developing countries, particularly those most vulnerable to climate change, is necessary.

24. Participants highlighted the merits of sharing knowledge, technologies and tools for adaptation while noting the diversity of national circumstances. In addition to agriculture, water, health and coastal zone management, which have been perceived as high priority areas, the need for enhancing adaptation in other sectors such as services, tourism and other similar businesses to climate change has been recognized.

25. The Seminar stressed the linkage of UNFCCC Art. 6 activities and efforts on mainstreaming adaptation. To ensure the greater involvement of stakeholders, ways of communicating to the public regarding accurate information on local impacts may be carefully examined. At global level, UNFCCC clearing house on Art. 6, which is under development, can be a useful vehicle to exchange information on effective adaptation policies and measures.

26. Regional cooperation in adaptation is considered crucial especially in sharing information, views and experience, as well as capacity building. In this regard, participants commended the activities under the Scientific Capacity Building/Enhancement for Sustainable Development in

Developing Countries (CAPaBLE) of the Asia-Pacific Network on Global Change Research (APN).

27. Participants agreed that adaptation should be included as an ongoing item for discussion in future Asia-Pacific seminars particularly to enable sharing of information on the costs and benefits of different adaptation measures that have been implemented in various countries.

Implementation of Art. 6 of the UNFCCC

28. Participants of the Seminar, who also attended the Regional Workshop on Art. 6 of the UNFCCC, noted that the Seminar was an effective vehicle for promoting exchange of information and experiences on Article 6 activities in the region.

29. The Seminar recognized there are several challenges as well as opportunities for countries in implementing Art. 6 of the UNFCCC, in the context of the topics discussed at the Seminar. The participants reiterated that Art. 6 activities are integral elements in driving climate change-related actions forward, and emphasized the necessity for continuity of such efforts.

30. Participants noted several region- and country-specific barriers in implementing Art. 6 activities and provided concrete suggestions for engaging key stakeholders through disseminating well-targeted information. In order to strengthen public awareness strategies, many participants recommended more effective involvement of NGOs, and noted the need for designing appropriate incentives for all stakeholders, including developed countries.

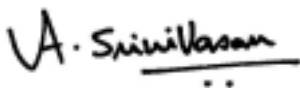
31. Participants recognized that most countries in the region have not established specific policies on Art. 6 related activities *per se*, largely due to other competing urgent priorities at the national level. In developing UNFCCC clearing house, the Asia-Pacific Network on Climate Change (AP-net) and other similar networks in the region could serve as potential partners.

32. Participants noted that all countries were cooperating in climate change efforts regionally and internationally but not specifically on implementation of Art. 6. The Seminar recognized the desirability of developing regional and/or sub-regional strategies focusing on elements such as training and education with emphasis on country-driven needs assessment, and of broadening resource base for supporting implementation of Art. 6 activities in the region.

33. All participants extended sincere appreciation to MoEJ and other organizers for their outstanding support to the Seminar, which continues to facilitate fruitful and stimulating discussions on efforts to tackle climate change in the Asia-Pacific region.

Chairperson of the Fifteenth Asia-Pacific Seminar on Climate Change

15 September 2005



Dr. Ancha Srinivasan