

The 20<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Seminar on Climate Change  
“Promoting the Strategic Development of the Resilient Asia-Pacific”  
Co-chairs’ Summary

1. The Ministry of the Environment, Japan (MOEJ), the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency (DCCEE), Australia, the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (ONEP/MONRE), Thailand, and the Overseas Environmental Cooperation Center, Japan (OECC) jointly organized the Twentieth Asia-Pacific Seminar on Climate Change, in Bangkok, Thailand on 14-15 March, 2012.

Organization of the Seminar

2. 42 experts from 16 countries and 8 international organizations, research institutes and other relevant entities participated in the Seminar. The Seminar was inaugurated by Dr. Supat Wangwongwatana, Secretary-General, ONEP, MONRE, and Thailand. In his opening address, he recalled the recent great flood event in Thailand, from which many people had suffered. He stressed that many lessons should be drawn from it for increasing resilience to natural disaster, including those induced by climate change. The organization of the 20<sup>th</sup> Seminar itself was affected by the flood and was rescheduled from November 2011. He emphasized that the 20<sup>th</sup> Seminar would provide an important momentum to discuss the issue of adaptation to climate change, and should contribute to promoting the strategic development of the resilient Asia-Pacific.

3. For the substance of the Seminar, participants discussed the issue of adaptation to climate change, in particular, 1) Bringing Domestic Adaptation Efforts in Concert (Domestic Coordination and Arrangements), 2) National Planning on Adaptation to Climate Change, 3) Supporting Adaptation, and 4) “Loss and Damage”. The Seminar was co-chaired by Mr. Michihiro Oi, Negotiator, the Office of International Strategy on Climate Change, the MOEJ, and Mr. Gregory Andrews, Assistant Secretary, the Finance, Forests and Development Branch, the International Division, the DCCEE, Australia, supported by session chairs. To the above substantive topics, participants were invited to make presentations on their efforts and the challenges they faced, followed by the “key questions” and background information posed by the OECC to stimulate interactive discussion among participants.

4. The Seminar contributed to the exchange of views, and useful information and experiences, mutual capacity strengthening of participants, and confidence-building among the countries, which aimed to create an enabling environment for negotiations, regional cooperation, as well as domestic implementation of adaptation measures. Many participants were impressed by how much adaptation action were already taking place in the Asia-Pacific region and committed to increasing communication and cooperation among neighbors.

## Substantive Sessions

### Session I: Bringing Domestic Adaptation Efforts in Concert (Domestic Coordination and Arrangements)

5. As a key element to increase resilience to climatic events, and conducting adaptation efforts in effective way, the issue of domestic coordination and arrangement was discussed, guided by Mr. Jailan Bin Simon, Head, the Climate and Hydrology Section, the Malaysian Meteorological Department.

6. The presentations in the session revealed that some countries had created national frameworks related to adaptation to climate change, with the institutional arrangement in hybrid structure that includes different ministries, local governments, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sectors where appropriate. Some participants highlighted the benefit and challenges of having a separate central organization or commission on climate change, especially challenges of coordination across national and local development. In order to address such a challenge, institutionalization of adaptation efforts is underway in many countries, and integration into national and local development planning process is extremely important.

7. It was generally agreed that since no single organization can handle climate change by itself and networking was a useful approach to strengthening coordinated adaptation actions in concert. In its initiation stage, it is recommended that stakeholders should focus on building relationships. Cooperation and collaboration work better once relevant sectors are grouped according to their functions and related risks from climate change. This includes mapping existing activities and assistance and sorting out current coverage. In many cases, a bottom-up approach is useful and provides opportunity to actively engage local communities and reflect their adaptation needs and circumstances more accurately. This is the case in information collection for vulnerability assessment.

8. It was also noted that domestic arrangements should include the active role played by scientists, as key informers. They can provide policy makers and planners with vital and objective information for sound adaptation. Also, the private sector engagement is important in promoting wide range of adaptation measures, and scaling up resources for investment. While some private companies are interested in contributing to creating a resilient society, they need to be informed more on policies, science, and local needs. Another key point was that domestic institutional arrangements and networks may provide a platform and coordination functions for domestic and international resources, and in some countries, international donors enjoy the benefit of utilizing such a platform.

### Session II: National Planning on Adaptation to Climate Change

9. As an effort to mainstream adaptation concerns, define targets and associated actions, distribute

responsibilities, and allocate resources in effective and efficient way, planning on adaptation to climate change is of outstanding importance. The Session II focused on the issue of planning adaptation to climate change at national level, and facilitated by Ms. Yulia Sryanti, Head, the Sub-Division for Monitoring and Evaluation of Climate Change Adaptation Tools, the State Ministry of Environment, the Republic of Indonesia.

10. Participants shared a view that adaptation planning is to make a plan for risks and uncertainty posed by climate change, deviating from business as usual (BAU). Duplication of efforts with existing master plans or strategies should be avoided. In this regard, stock-taking is necessary as a good start of sound adaptation. Also, it is important to capture an overall picture of different adaptation needs, and then to prioritize them (including clarifying where, how, who and when). It is also helpful to conduct consultation among key players as part of the planning process.

11. Sound planning of adaptation requires mainstreaming of adaptation concerns, and governments need to be adaptation sensitive at all levels and sectors, and integrate those concerns into national development plans and their “core business”. In many cases, adaptation, as a stand-alone element, does not have legal basis, but if it is incorporated into sectoral policies, legal instruments in such sectors provide good foundation. In this regard, some participants pointed out that it would be useful to extend adaptation efforts, building upon existing legal frameworks, rather than creating something new.

12. In the international cooperation context, mainstreaming adaptation concerns into development has to be consultative, country-driven and based on trust between developing countries and donors. Through mainstreaming efforts, developing countries, including SIDs and LDCs can strengthen absorptive capacity of internationally provided support, and of maximizing the benefit of utilizing such resources. During the discussion in the session, some successful cases were introduced that elaborating a national adaptation plan integrated into their sectoral policies enabled scaling up resources for adaptation, by co-financing projects.

13. For mainstreaming adaptation, the involvement of national, regional, local as well as sectoral development planner is vital. Also, financial arrangement is key to it, in order to bring such plans into smooth implementation. In this regard, participants felt that showing the magnitude of risks and impact in more exact term (i.e. the cost of expected losses with and without adaptation) was useful. While there are many efforts underway to provide such proof, there remains room for further elaboration, as methodologies of estimation (such as in economic terms) are not yet well established.

14. The effectiveness of adaptation plans need to be measured and evaluated. Though timing and methodologies of the evaluation is not yet common, it should at least be conducted within planning and operation cycles of the larger development. Where adaptation concerns are integrated it will provide feedback for improvement within the relevant framework.

15. Response to climate change is essentially common to developing and developed countries, while

there is a difference in the level of their capacity. In this regard, it is important to share information and experiences on good practices of adaptation in the Asia-Pacific regional and sub-regional context.

### Session III: Support to Adaptation

16. With the accelerated international negotiation and domestic efforts on adaptation, the attention given to support to adaptation has become high. The Session focused on the issue of support to adaptation, and facilitated by Dr. Ancha Srinivasan, Principal Climate Change Specialist, the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

17. Presentations showed that increasing the level and channels of support to adaptation through finance, technology, and capacity-building is an emerging trend, and reaffirmed that developed countries' commitment to support developing countries adaptation in partnership with developing countries, together with mitigation to climate change, brought positive outputs in the Asia-Pacific region. Also, multilateral funding sources are increasing through the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Trust Fund, the Least Developing Country Fund (LDCF), the Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), and the Adaptation Fund (AF), together with bilateral and private financing.

18. Participants pointed out that, in order to maximize the benefit of such trends, it was vital that the readiness of mobilizing and operationalizing international support, by defining national priorities through adaptation planning, and strengthening capacity of developing countries, in particular on management of finance. It was also pointed out that national and international resources are expected to support adaptation to climate change in developing countries in a complementary manner to traditional development, which would provide a stronger impact of intervention. In this regard, it is important to capture an overall picture of domestic finances (national and local budget) that cover adaptation-related activities to provide a baseline and ensure adaptation needs are efficiently covered, while avoiding unnecessary duplication.

19. It was generally agreed that a shift from a project-based approach to a programmatic approach was important to maximize the effectiveness of support to adaptation. In elaborating adaptation programmes, it is also important to involve finance ministry and planning agency, which already have experience with cross-sectoral responsibilities, together with line ministries.

20. In the presentations and discussion, it was introduced that many countries had already established national bodies for adaptation, however they did not always have expertise on how to apply for and manage the financial support for adaptation. Some participants suggested that establishing expertise to assist in facilitating internationally-supported adaptation efforts, by helping navigate access to adaptation funding, and giving project management support, could be useful. This could take the form of hiring an expert or building a mechanism within the national body, and this itself could be a good candidate for support.

21. Participants noted that while mitigation technology needs were relatively well studied

responded, adaptation technology assessment were not and should be examined. It was highlighted such technologies were not limited to modern technologies but also indigenous technologies. It was mentioned that capacity-building would continue to be a crucial area of support, and sustaining institutional capacity would be a core of the effective planning and implementation of adaptation measures.

#### Session IV: Loss and damage

22. Following the Durban Outcomes, the session took up the issue of “loss & damage” as part of its agenda. The concept of “loss & damage” is new and neither defined nor widely shared, therefore the session provided participants with an opportunity to brainstorm the issue. Also, it provided a good opportunity for the participants to prepare for the UNFCCC expert meeting on assessing the risk of loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, to be held in Tokyo, Japan from the 26 to 28 March 2012. The Session was chaired by Gregory Andrews, Assistant Secretary, the Finance, Forests and Development Branch, the International Division, the DCCEE, Australia

23. To stimulate discussions, the words ‘Loss and damage’ were accepted to mean the economic and human consequences as a result of certain hazards, in this case the extreme weather events and slow onset events that are attributable to climate change. To lower the loss and damage caused by climate change, vulnerable developing countries need to understand the risks that they face, and examine different approaches to lower those risks.

24. The quantitative understanding and evaluation of loss (including monetary terms) caused by natural disasters was introduced by Thailand, and such data was developed and used in order to better inform national and local planners, as well as administrators of disaster risk management of what needs to be considered and incorporated into their post-disaster activities. Thailand’s thorough record keeping shows an increasing incidence of many climate related disasters and allows them to priorities efforts into national planning and development.

25. Some participants noted the natural overlap in work to reduce the risk from extreme weather disasters and climate change adaptation. This was in light of the IPCC Special Report on Managing the Risks of Extreme Weather Events, which was released late last year. Some Pacific Island countries (PICs) noted that they have a coordinated national response to address both climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, called Joint National Action Plans (JNAPs). The Philippines has also attempted to address both issues, signing a memorandum of understanding between its central climate change and disaster risk reduction bodies.

26. Participants raised a number of actual approaches that developing countries can use to reduce the risk of loss and damage, like vulnerability assessments, hazard mapping and land use planning. For example, the Philippines created a resource book for local communities explaining the 12 steps for

Comprehensive Land Use Plan preparation. Other approaches include hard infrastructure solutions, and Malaysia used the Smart Tunnel in Kuala Lumpur (which can be used to ease both traffic congestion and flood water) as a good example.

27. Some participants were also interested in the idea of transferring risk (that could not be reduced through other means). Usually this can be done through private insurance although some PICs noted that the private insurance market was not sufficient to cover loss and damages that would be caused by climate change in their sub-region and were interested in exploring the idea of an insurance mechanism. Australia explained that even in a developed country the lack of private insurance (including underinsurance) was a major issue. Participants acknowledged that lessons learned from developed countries were quite useful, but approaches must be specific to the needs of the most vulnerable developing countries, particularly LDCs and PICs.



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