

**Chair's Summary of the Eleventh Environment Congress for Asia and the Pacific
(ECO ASIA 2003)**

**Kanagawa, Japan
7 June 2003**

1. The Eleventh Environment Congress for Asia and the Pacific (ECO ASIA 2003) was held in Kanagawa Prefecture, Japan on 7 June 2003, hosted by the Ministry of the Environment of Japan. The Congress was attended by national delegates from 20 countries, including five Ministers, representatives from 12 international organizations, and a wide range of other participants.
2. The Congress aimed to assess the region's efforts toward sustainable development since the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and to discuss the future direction of cooperation in the region by recognizing ECO ASIA as one of the fora to address opinions on sustainable development at the ministerial level in Asia and the Pacific. In accordance with these aims, the participants held discussions as follows.
3. The Congress was chaired by H.E. Mr. Shunichi Suzuki, Minister of the Environment, Japan, and vice-chaired by H.E. Dato Seri Law Hieng Ding, Minister of Science, Technology and the Environment, Malaysia, and H.E. Prof. Dr. Bountiem Phissamay, Minister to the Prime Minister's Office, Chairman of Science, Technology, and Environment Agency, Lao PDR.

Efforts toward the Establishment of a Sustainable Society

4. The first session began with an introduction of the historic development of environmental policy and international environmental cooperation in Kanagawa prefecture, waste and recycling policy in Yokosuka city and water environment management in Hayama town. Participating countries introduced a variety of domestic policies and international cooperation measures now being undertaken. The Ministry of the Environment of Japan introduced its Basic Plan for Establishing a Recycling-based Society, stressing the importance of the "improvement of resources productivity" for the establishment of a sustainable society, which was also included in the 'Science and Technology for Sustainable Development: A G8 Action Plan' put forth at the G8 Summit in Evian, France, held 1-3 June 2003.

5. In proceeding with these, the following actions were noted as important:
 - To integrate environmental policies into national economic and social development policies.
 - To strive for the sound implementation of measures relevant to natural resource management, including forests and water, as well as waste and recycling policy and transboundary environmental issues in order to establish a sustainable society.
 - To promote partnerships and participation among stakeholders and enhance cooperation, notably cooperation on capacity building and improving finance-related partnerships in Asia and the Pacific region and at the global level.

6. The Congress addressed the importance of enhancing measures to tackle global warming in Asia and the Pacific region, notably in small island states in the South Pacific, and emphasized that coastal areas, islands and mountain areas in Asia and the Pacific region are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Many participants reaffirmed the importance of the Kyoto Protocol in facing the challenge of global warming and it was agreed that ECO ASIA would follow up on efforts to be made by countries and institutions. It was also agreed that ECO ASIA would support the newly-launched Scientific Capacity Building/Enhancement for Sustainable Development in Developing Countries (CAPaBLE) programme under the framework of the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN), whose programme was included in the Joint Action Plan of the Third Pacific Island Leaders Meeting (PALM3).

Implementation of the Outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development

7. With regard to the implementation of the outcomes of the WSSD in Asia and the Pacific region, the progress and future plans of two projects initiated by ECO ASIA, namely 1) the Asia-Pacific Forum for Environment and Development (APFED) and 2) the Asia-Pacific Environmental Innovation Strategy Project (APEIS), were presented.

8. With regard to APFED, the activities carried out after its establishment at ECO ASIA 2001 were reported, most notably the APFED message to the WSSD and its future work plan, including implementation of the APFED Type II Initiative. Discussions were held regarding further efforts to be undertaken before APFED's final report is delivered at the ESCAP Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific (MCED) in 2005. Citing APFED's intellectual impetus to the output of the WSSD, participants recognized APFED as invaluable in articulating an agenda for the Asia-Pacific Region. Participants expressed their high

expectations for APFED's on-going contributions, particularly with regard to action-oriented output well-focused on a limited number of priority issues. Participants also stated their determination to support APFED's efforts in any way possible and expressed a desire to enhance their interaction with APFED activities.

9. With regard to APEIS, it was emphasized that the success of the project depends on the extent to which its products and results are of practical value to policymakers. To this end, ECO ASIA participants were encouraged to participate in interactive demonstration activities, which will be launched shortly in close collaboration between policymakers and scientists.
10. With regard to Integrated Environmental Monitoring (IEM), the Congress was advised that large-scale environmental degradation caused by human activities, including degradation possibly caused by climate change, has become evident in Asia and the Pacific region, and that the area, frequency and degree of this degradation in the Asia-Pacific region has been found to be much more severe than predicted. As an effective measure to tackle these problems, the importance of integrated watershed management, among others, was stressed. With regard to the Integrated Environmental Assessment (IEA), it was indicated that the potential for environment-related technological innovation is very large. The potential impacts of globalization on the environment and on the economy were highlighted and the necessity of collaborative efforts in trade and the environment in Asia and the Pacific region was confirmed.
11. Concerning the concrete execution of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) in Asia and the Pacific region, participants highlighted the importance of the following.
 - Promoting good governance.
 - Promoting concrete actions through multistakeholder partnerships at the regional and subregional levels and capacity building among various stakeholders, in accordance with the JPOI.
 - Promoting exchanges of experiences and information at the regional and subregional levels.
 - Tackling poverty eradication as a critical element in the realization of sustainable development, which would also contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.
 - Promoting education for sustainable development at all levels and in all sectors, which can be advanced by creating a "global learning space," based on regional centers of excellence.
 - Promoting follow-up on the Third World Water Forum, PALM3, and the Nagoya Conference on Environmentally Sustainable Transport.
 - Implementing APFED activities and its three commitments set forth as its Type II Initiative,

which will play a significant role.

12. Taking all of the above issues into consideration, the following points were endorsed in order to clarify further the direction for ECO ASIA to take in the future.
 - To recognize ECO ASIA as a forum which addresses at the ministerial level views concerning the implementation of the outcomes emerging from the WSSD in Asia and the Pacific region and which will contribute to the new program of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), with a view to strengthening its regional perspectives.
 - To make use of ECO ASIA as a means for enhancing cooperation at regional conferences, such as at ESCAP and the ASEAN+3 Environment Ministers Meeting.

13. The participants expressed their gratitude to the Ministry of the Environment of Japan for organizing and hosting the meeting, and also expressed their appreciation to the Kanagawa Prefectural Government, the city of Yokosuka, Hayama town and the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) for co-hosting the meeting.