

The 15th Environment Congress for Asia and the Pacific

(ECO Asia 2007)

Fukuoka City, September 8, 2007

Chair's Summary

1. The 15th Environment Congress for Asia and the Pacific, ECO Asia 2007, was convened in Fukuoka City, Fukuoka Prefecture, Japan on September 8, 2007. The Congress was organized by the Ministry of the Environment of Japan and hosted by Fukuoka City. The Congress was attended by national delegates, including Ministers and senior officials from 17 countries, 11 representatives from international organizations, and a wide range of other participants.
2. Reaffirming the importance of regional cooperation in addressing a wide variety of environmental issues in line with tackling sustainable development challenges in the Asia-Pacific region, the Congress aimed at exchanging information and views on policies and measures at regional, national, and local levels. ECO Asia 2007 focused on two themes, namely Waste Management and Recycling and Climate Change, considering the emerging and increasing importance of these topics, amongst others, in the Asia-Pacific region.

Opening Session

3. In his opening remarks, H.E. Dr. Ichiro Kamoshita, Minister of the Environment of Japan, pointed out two key points for channelling the rapid economic development now underway in the Asia-Pacific region in an environmentally sustainable direction. One is the development of environmental technology. The other is a change of lifestyle from an energy- and resource-intensive one to an environmentally-friendly one. He introduced "Becoming a Leading Environmental Nation in the 21st Century: Japan's Strategy for a Sustainable Society" and Japan's determination to become a model of a sustainable society based on its past experiences in overcoming pollution issues in the course of its economic development. He also highlighted Cool Earth 50, a mid-to-long term climate strategy, as well as Japan's leadership in enhancing the 3Rs (reduce, reuse, and recycle) in waste

management. He concluded his remarks by expressing his expectations for frank and lively discussions by the Congress.

4. Mr. Hiroshi Yoshida, Mayor of Fukuoka City, Fukuoka Prefecture, Japan, welcomed the distinguished participants on behalf of the citizens of Fukuoka City. He introduced various advanced environmental initiatives taken by the municipal government, such as delivering urban ozone data to citizens via e-mail to mobile phones when an excessive photochemical oxidant level is predicted, energy-saving measures including plants on building walls and setting summer air-conditioning temperatures in the City Hall at 28 degrees, and a campaign entitled “ECO Wave Fukuoka” to promote an eco-friendly lifestyle among citizens and businesses, taking advantage of the opportunity of hosting ECO Asia 2007.
5. The Congress unanimously elected H.E. Dr. Ichiro Kamoshita, Minister of the Environment of Japan, as the Chair of the meeting. The Congress also adopted the Agenda and designated Dr. Chettiyappan Visvanathan, Professor of the Asian Institute for Technology (AIT), and Dr. Shuzo Nishioka, Advisor to the National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES) of Japan, served as facilitators for the “Waste Management and Recycling” and “Climate Change” sessions, respectively.

Session 1: Waste Management and Recycling

6. Following the opening remarks for the session by Minister Kamoshita of Japan, Prof. Chettiyappan Visvanathan acted as Session Facilitator and invited Mr. Hideto Yoshida, Director-General of the Waste Management and Recycling Department of the Ministry of the Environment, Japan, to give short introductory remarks on the Japanese experience in developing a sound material-cycle society. After that, three lead-off presentations were made by Mr. Hiroshi Yoshida, Mayor of Fukuoka City, Dr. Truong Manh Tien, Director General, Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Vietnam, and Mr. Taku Ohmura of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).
7. Mr. Hideto Yoshida, Ministry of the Environment of Japan, explained Japan’s experience in improving serious waste-related issues in Japan. Japan has promoted the 3R Initiative in close collaboration with developing countries as well as international organizations in the Asia-Pacific region. Mr. Yoshida emphasized the importance of creating an international sound material-cycle society at the regional level as one of the concrete actions introduced

under the aforementioned “Becoming a Leading Environmental Nation in the 21st Century: Japan’s Strategy for a Sustainable Society.”

8. Mr. Hiroshi Yoshida, Mayor of Fukuoka City, explained the city’s initiatives for waste management and recycling, including a number of good environmental practices such as door-to-door collection of household wastes at night that keeps the streets garbage bag-free in daytime and paper recycling stations set up in 144 communities in the city. The well-regarded Fukuoka Method, a low-cost, low-technology and eco-friendly semi-aerobic landfill method, has been adopted in many counties and about 900 personnel from 78 countries have been trained in the City over the last 5 years.
9. Dr. Truong Manh Tien, Director General, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Vietnam, overviewed the current waste challenges in Vietnam, including growing challenges resulting from the quantities, compositions, diversity, and toxicity of wastes. In response, the “National Strategy on Waste Reduce, Reuse and Recycle to 2030” has been under development as an overall implementation strategy of the 3Rs with specific numerical targets to be achieved by 2030 with support from the Ministry of the Environment of Japan, United Nations Centre for Regional Development, Asia Development Bank, and the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies.
10. Mr. Taku Ohmura, Asian Development Bank, stated the need for reforming the region into a resource-efficient society with 3R principles. Promoting the 3Rs brings opportunities such as investment for the further development of the regional economy. Towards that end, governmental roles and the private sector’s actions need to be further enhanced. Emerging trans-boundary movement of recyclables can be an opportunity for region-wide resource efficiency. However, this will require both careful assessment and enhanced responses to avoid environmental risks, through regionally concerted approaches.
11. Participants then discussed important points for promoting international collaboration among countries as well as increasing resource efficiency in the Asia-Pacific region as a whole. Major points of the discussion included: challenges for waste management and recycling, regional cooperation, national policy and local actions, good practices dissemination, and the role of the private sector.

Challenges for Waste Management and Recycling

12. Each country in the Asia-Pacific region faces increases in the generation of waste as a result of rapid economic development. Although the specific nature of waste-related problems varies from one nation to another, each country faces similar waste management issues, including proper treatment and recycling of municipal solid waste, packaging and plastic waste, medical waste, e-waste, agricultural waste and construction waste, environmentally harmful open-dumping, and shortages of landfills. Often recycling in developing countries is conducted improperly and fragmentally by the informal sector due to lack of awareness. Also, the international flow of recyclable resources is increasing among the countries in the region.
13. In light of these issues and resource scarcity, the importance of establishing a sound material-cycle society in each country as well as in the Asia-Pacific region as a whole was generally recognized by the Congress. Institutions, technology, and a social and economic system for the 3Rs were noted as the key components in establishing a sound material-cycle society. For advancing sustainable production and consumption, a key approach will be increasing resource productivity in the region through the encouraging of investment and innovation for proper waste management and recycling.
14. In relation to this, it will be necessary to take the following approaches: (i) build a sound material-cycle society by improving waste treatment and recycling capacity in each country, and at the same time, (ii) develop and reinforce activities to prevent the illegal trade of wastes, especially toxic and hazardous ones. Based on (i) and (ii), (iii) it is important to facilitate utilization of recyclable resources through international trade – as supplemental to domestic resource circulation – to reduce environmental pollution and increase resource productivity.

Regional Cooperation

15. In the Asia-Pacific region, especially in East Asia where the increasing international circulation of resources is particularly prominent, it is important to improve the availability of statistics to enable policy planning, such as waste generation volumes in each country and exports and imports of recyclable resources. Also, it is necessary to continue policy dialogues among countries in the region, aiming at a shared vision of a material-cycle society for the region as well as the formulation of standards for proper waste management and recycling.

16. As one concrete regional cooperation activity to promote the effective implementation of the 3Rs, it is critical to develop knowledge, technological, and educational infrastructures to disseminate vital information on policy and technology in the region in close collaboration with various stakeholders. “The 3R Knowledge Hub,” initiated by UNEP, AIT, UNESCAP, and ADB, as well as Asia-Pacific research networks among researchers in the fields of waste management and the 3Rs, are expected to serve such a function. Also, United Nations University promotes an on-going initiative called Regional Centres of Expertise to facilitate education for sustainable development. Such initiatives are expected to collect lessons learned from not only successes but also failures in attempts to promote the 3Rs and other similar initiatives.

17. Capacity development through international cooperation and collaborative efforts at the regional level, in addition to individual national and local efforts, is important for solving similar waste management issues among countries. In this regard, the Ministerial Regional Forum on Environment and Health in South-East and East Asian countries, including its “Thematic Working Group on Solid and Hazardous Waste,” is one of the important forums in the region. Also, bi- and multi-lateral donor agencies have a vital role to play in facilitating regionally concerted approaches. Needs of capacity development of small and island countries are generally acknowledged.

National Policy and Local Actions

18. Formulating national strategies, plans and legal frameworks, such as “National 3R Strategy Making” in Vietnam and Indonesia, is essential in implementing policies and measures that are effective in promoting environmentally sound waste management and the 3Rs at the national level. With careful consideration of each country’s condition, the adoption of the Polluter Pays Principle, Extended Producer Responsibility, and market-based approaches can be an effective and efficient way to implement such policies and measures.

19. International cooperation at the local level, such as the inter-city cooperation of promoting the Fukuoka Method by Fukuoka City, can play a vital role in facilitating know-how sharing and technology transfer among local governments, supplementing international cooperation frameworks at the national level. In many ways, local-level activities can provide effective responses and lessons finely tuned to the various area-specific conditions and needs in Asia-Pacific countries.

Good Practices Dissemination

20. Good practices on environmentally sound waste management and the 3Rs need to be promoted through the involvement of multiple stakeholders, including partnership among central and local governments, businesses, NGOs, local communities, academia, and international organizations. Policy dialogues, incentive provision, awareness-building, and other policy measures are required to facilitate multi-stakeholder involvement and partnership for the 3Rs. Good practices in community-based approaches, such as organizing the informal sector in waste management or small-scale composting at the household level to generate synergies between poverty reduction and the 3Rs, should be further disseminated. Showing effectiveness and efficiency of good practices in waste management and the 3Rs through analyses of cost-effectiveness can supplement dissemination activities.

Private Sector's Role

21. To increase resource productivity in the Asia-Pacific region as a whole, the private sector can contribute at the international level by investing in increased technical capacity in environmental management, environmentally conscious design, or utilizing by-products and secondary materials through their transnational supply chain networks. Establishing eco-industrial parks can be one of the options to facilitate such voluntary actions for the 3Rs by the private sector. At the local level, multi-stakeholder collaboration among stakeholders such as local governments, private sectors, waste management service providers, and local communities is essential to implement national/local policies such as those covering proper waste management and proper waste separation for recycling.

Synergies between climate change issues and proper waste management and the 3Rs

22. The promotion of environmentally sound waste management and the 3Rs, including the waste-to-energy concept, was recognized by the Congress as being an effective response to climate change because of the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions resulting from energy recovery, utilization of biomass, and environmentally-sound landfill practices in the process.

Session 2: Climate Change

23. Following the opening remarks for the session made by Minister Kamoshita of Japan, Dr. Shuzo Nishioka of the National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES) of Japan acted as Session Facilitator. He invited Mr. Hideki Minamikawa, Director General of the Global

Environment Bureau of the Ministry of the Environment of Japan to give his introductory speech on key climate change policies and measures being undertaken by Japan. Lead-off speeches by Mr. Kok Kee Chow, Chair of the Expert Group on Technology Transfer, UNFCCC, and Dr. Nobuo Mimura of Ibaraki University followed.

24. Mr. Hideki Minamikawa, Ministry of the Environment of Japan, explained Japan's recent initiatives on climate change, including Cool Earth 50 and Co-benefits Asia-Pacific Initiatives. He emphasized the need for a long-term vision for developing innovative technologies and building a low-carbon society in order to achieve the goal of halving emissions by 2050. He expressed the hope of improving the co-benefits approach through discussions with Asia-Pacific countries and international organizations concerned.
25. Mr. Kok Kee Chow, UNFCCC, argued that a low-carbon society is a common goal for all countries. Regional cooperation, confidence building, transfer of technology, and finance will facilitate countries in establishing low-carbon societies at an early stage. To promote co-benefits, it is important to promote capacity building and joint research & development (R&D). Regional initiatives such as the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN) and the Asia-Pacific Seminar on Climate Change, as well as market mechanisms such as CDM, promote low-carbon technology in the Asia-Pacific region.
26. Dr. Nobuo Mimura, Ibaraki University, proposed a win-win approach to adaptation that can contribute to sustainable development by realizing co-benefits in addressing both present vulnerability and impacts of climate change. He also highlighted the importance of a portfolio of mitigation and adaptation, mainstreaming adaptation to develop society's adaptive capacity, and the crucial role of official development assistance (ODA) for adaptation in consideration of limited access to the Adaptation Fund.
27. The Congress then took up regional collaboration for coping with climate change in the Asia-Pacific region, such as pathways towards a Low Carbon Society, realization of co-benefits, regional collaboration for adaptation, further utilization of market mechanisms, and the post-2012 framework. The Congress expressed its appreciation towards Indonesia's efforts to host the forthcoming COP13 and COP/MOP 3 in Bali in December 2007 and participants expressed their determination to participate actively in its process to lead it to success. The Congress also expressed its support, as a valuable input to international discussions, "Cool Earth 50," proposed by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in May 2007, which

includes a long-term target to cut global emissions by half from the current level by 2050 and three principles for an effective framework for addressing climate change beyond 2012.

Low-Carbon Society

28. The Congress agreed on the importance of establishing a low-carbon society in the Asia-Pacific region that decouples economic growth and GHG emissions and is characterized by a high quality of life and reduced GHG emissions. Participants stressed the necessity for intensified regional cooperation to this end. Technology and change of lifestyles, including business styles and greater use of public transport systems, were indicated as key in realizing a low-carbon society, as well as diffusion of existing technologies and development of innovative technologies, use of bio-fuels and renewable energy, and changes in people's approaches from "the bigger, the better" to more energy- and resource-efficient ways of thinking. A concrete vision for a low-carbon society should be discussed more intensively and shared by the region, reflecting global concerns and regional circumstances. In this respect, there was an appreciation of and expectation towards Japan's efforts to establish a low-carbon society in this region.

Co-benefits

29. Considering the urgent need for anti-pollution countermeasures in the Asia-Pacific region, a co-benefits approach, which seeks to address climate change through taking measures against local concerns, particularly towards pollution, was agreed to be implemented in this region. Awareness raising, capacity building, technology transfer, joint research and observation, and a financial mechanism to support such activities should be encouraged. The Congress welcomed the Co-benefits Asia-Pacific Initiatives by the Government of Japan, and encouraged further use of the Asia-Pacific Seminar on Climate Change for this purpose.

Adaptation

30. In order to pursue sustainable development, adaptation should be mainstreamed in various national development efforts as well as in international development assistance. Regional collaboration for mutually-supporting adaptation efforts taken by each country in the Asia-Pacific region should be broadened. Such regional collaboration would include capacity building, joint research, regional monitoring, and the sharing and dissemination of scientific knowledge, as well as financial schemes against disaster damage. In doing so, it is expected that ongoing efforts such as the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN) can be utilized more effectively and intensively.

Mechanisms to foster mitigation and adaptation

31. Use of market mechanisms should be enhanced to enable cost-effective means of coping with climate change. Market mechanisms, such as the CDM, are expected to contribute to promote technology transfer and private financial flows to developing countries. However, imperfections of market mechanisms in addressing climate change issues should also be thoroughly taken into account.

32. Technology transfer and financial resource mobilization for mitigation and adaptation should be enhanced at the regional level. The Congress welcomed the initiative of the Government of Japan of “Enhanced Sustainable Development for Asia (ESDA)” which was started at the Annual Meeting of ADB in May this year, as well as the Energy Efficiency Initiative and the Carbon Market Initiative undertaken by ADB.

Framework beyond 2012

33. The Congress reaffirmed the ultimate goal of the UNFCCC and determined an effective framework and concerted actions beyond 2012, in which all countries participate to address climate change in lines with principles of the UNFCCC. A framework beyond 2012 may include, as its basic elements, such points as various commitments on a fair and equitable basis, mitigation, adaptation, carbon sinks, market mechanisms, technology transfer, and financial mechanisms.

Session 3: Wrap-up

34. The Congress welcomed a proposal made by Mr. Masao Yamada, Vice-Mayor of Nagoya City, Aichi Prefecture, Japan, and unanimously agreed that the next ECO Asia will be held in Nagoya City.

35. The Congress expressed its sincere gratitude for the leadership of Minister Kamoshita and for the hospitality provided by Fukuoka City and requested the Chair to note it.

36. The results of this Congress should be communicated to the UNFCCC COP13 and COP/MOP3 in December 2007 in Bali, Indonesia, G8 Environment Ministers’ Meeting in May 2008, the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit in July 2008, and other pertinent fora.