

**Workshop 2010 of the Asian Network for Prevention of
Illegal Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes**

27 January 2010, Yokohama, Japan

Opening Remarks by Nobumori Otani

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Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Ministry of the Environment of Japan, I would like to welcome all of you to the Workshop 2010 of the Asian Network for Prevention of Illegal Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes. I deeply appreciate your valuable participation in the workshop held here in Yokohama, which is the second largest incorporated city with the first Customs of Japan, having 3.6 million populations and the international port marked at the 150th anniversary last year since its opening in 1859.

I would like to briefly introduce the “Asian Network for Prevention of Illegal Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes” for those who are not familiar with. In 2003, the Government of Japan proposed the concepts of the Asian Network at the First Session of the Open-ended Working Group of the Basel Convention, emphasizing the importance of regional approach against the serious environmental crime of illegal transboundary movement of hazardous wastes. The Asian Network aims at facilitating the information exchange and dissemination and enhancing enforcement capacity of member countries for the implementation of the Basel Convention in the region. We have organized a network workshop since 2004 on an annual basis and taken steps forward for the better control on transboundary movement of hazardous wastes. I would like to thank your countries’ continuous contribution to the network activities.

With progress of the globalization and rapid economic growth of Asian countries, the trade of recyclable resources has been more and more activated. Recyclable resources can fulfil part of demand for natural resources, enhance energy security and fuel the economic activities of the states. On the other hand, hazardous wastes could harm

human health and the environment if treated in an environmentally unsound manner in importing countries. In addition, impacts of the world financial crisis revealed the fragility and uncertainty of the international material flow. Ensuring the legitimate and stable transboundary movements of recyclable resources constitutes the essential base for the vital development of the region.

The main theme of this year's workshop is the "reinforced collaboration between the Customs and Competent Authorities of the Basel Convention", based on the discussion in the last workshop held in Malaysia in 2009. Last year, the importance of cooperation between environmental and customs officers for the strengthened border control was highlighted. For this purpose, we have now the expanded participation from the Customs and relevant key organizations. This workshop will provide a significant opportunity to identify the challenges faced by the frontline officers and explore the effective collaborative measures to address them. I strongly hope the Asian Network could be a functional platform for the concerted efforts and cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The workshop recalls me the Inaugural Meeting of the Regional 3R Forum in Asia which I chaired on behalf of the Ministry of the Environment in the last November. The Regional 3R Forum in Asia was established in the meeting aiming at achieving the low carbon and sound material-cycle societies in Asia. For that purpose, the united efforts should be made through facilitating bilateral and multilateral cooperation among the Asian countries, international organizations and communities for increasing resource and energy efficiency and for promoting environmentally sound management of wastes. Under the forum, the Asian Network is one of the showcases of successful cooperative practices, serving as a drive for further innovative actions toward the ultimate goal.

Finally, it is my utmost hope that we can have open-minded and productive discussion during the coming three days. I would also like to wish you all to enjoy staying at the fantastic city of Yokohama.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.