

Declaration of the 3rd ASEM Environment Ministers' Meeting
April 24-26 2007

The ASEM heads of state and government at the ASEM Summit in Helsinki (11. September 2006) called for the continuation of the ASEM dialogue on environmental issues and welcomed the offer by Denmark to host the 3rd meeting of ASEM Environment Ministers.

1. Vision on climate change

The ASEM countries support the ultimate objective and the principles of the United Nations' Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol of stabilisation of greenhouse gas concentrations at a level that prevents dangerous interference with the climate system. In order to fulfil their full implementation, the ASEM countries decide to support a strengthened international cooperation on addressing climate change in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

In this regard the ASEM countries believe that a common understanding of the necessary overall efforts is useful for future actions to reduce emissions.

Recognising the key link between energy generation and greenhouse gas emissions, ASEM countries agree that an urgent shift in the nature of energy systems is needed, in order to ensure continued sustainable economic development, sustainable security of supply and improved demand management in order to avoid lock-in of unsustainable technologies in ASEM developing countries. ASEM countries are determined to enhance cooperation on research and development, deployment and transfer of low carbon emissions technologies.

The ASEM countries recognise the importance of COP13 in Bali, Indonesia in December 2007 and that progress should be made to promote an ambitious post2012 arrangement. The ASEM countries underlined the need to ensure a substantial process to be concluded as early as possible so to avoid a gap between the first and the second period.

2. The need for decoupling economic growth from energy consumption and CO2 emissions

The ASEM countries recognise the priority of developing countries to achieve sustainable economic growth and eradicate poverty. The ASEM countries underlined that meeting climate change goals, inter alia by improving energy efficiency and promoting renewable energy and the transfer of such technologies, is not only necessary, it is also possible while maintaining sustainable economic growth.

3. The role of renewable energy and energy efficiency

The ASEM countries recognise that measures to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency can boost economic performance and ensure energy security, while at the same time reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and air pollutants. These measures should be promoted to combat climate change and to ensure sustainable transition and diversification of supply.

The ASEM countries underline the importance of improving the efficiency of their energy production and consumption patterns, recognising that it is the most cost-effective way to tackle greenhouse gas emissions and strengthen energy security. The ASEM countries also stress the need to remove barriers towards the adoption of such cost-effective energy efficiency measures, including relevant barriers to technology transfer and information gaps.

The ASEM countries stress the importance of increasing the share of renewables in the energy mix, acknowledging the need to take national circumstances into account. The ASEM countries will strive to improve access to such modern energy technologies.

The ASEM countries express the importance of an ambitious post2012 arrangement in promoting the use of these technologies. They acknowledge the role of targets specifically for renewable energy and energy efficiency taking national circumstances into account.

4. The role of low carbon energy and cooperation on technology

The ASEM countries underline that there is a large potential not only in development of new technologies but also in a more efficient use of resources by application of simple measures, intelligent solutions and wide spread use of best available technologies and standards. Much could be achieved in both developed and developing countries if technologies that are already in place were fully deployed.

The ASEM countries acknowledge the need to step up there for increased cooperation on technology research, -development, -diffusion, -deployment and -transfer, between developed and developing countries in mitigating greenhouse gas emissions while maintaining economic growth.

ASEM countries recognise the importance and further potential of market-based mechanisms in assisting with technology transfer and note the need to enhance the CDM in this context. ASEM countries also note the need for other innovative approaches for promoting technology cooperation to facilitate deployment of low carbon technology, including energy efficiency and development of new low carbon technology.

ASEM countries further more recognise the important role of governments in promoting technology cooperation.

5. Cooperation on capability development

The ASEM countries acknowledge that increasing energy efficiency requires the application of technology, but also the development of capabilities such as energy management and energy auditing. The ASEM countries acknowledge the need for increased cooperation on capability development, including training on energy management by developed countries and showcasing of energy efficiency best practices.

6. Climate change causes loss of biodiversity

The conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity can strengthen ecosystem resilience, improving the ability of ecosystems to provide critical services in the face of increasing climatic pressures.

The ASEM countries will step up cooperation towards reaching the WSSD target to significantly reduce the current rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010.

The ASEM countries acknowledge that climate change causes greater loss of biodiversity and thus is a serious obstacle for meeting the WSSD target and the Millennium Development Goals 1 and 7. According to the latest IPCC report, approximately 20-30% of plant and animal species assessed so far are likely to be at increased risk of extinction if increases in global average temperature exceed 1,5-2,5 degrees.

7. Reducing deforestation

According to the IPCC (2007) deforestation contributes with up to 20 % of the global greenhouse gas emissions and leads to severe environmental, social, health and economic consequences and loss of biodiversity. The ASEM countries will work towards reducing deforestation and to promote sustainable forest management and soil conservation to enhance sinks of carbon dioxide. This is essential to mitigate and adapt to climate change and to preserve biodiversity.

Forests are also of great importance in preventing flooding and erosion, in securing good quality and quantity of water, and in protecting against natural disasters and improving the livelihoods of people living in or near them. The ASEM countries note an urgent need to promote cooperation between producer and consumer countries to combat illegal logging and the trade in illegal timber, reduced deforestation as well as to promote sustainable land use. Furthermore, actions should be taken to eradicate poverty in surrounding forest areas.

ASEM Countries agree that lessons should be learned from ongoing initiatives on shared responsibility between consumers and producers recognising efforts such as the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT), the Asian Forest Partnership (AFP) and the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO).

8. Biofuels and sustainability

The production of biofuels has considerable potential for diversification of energy, mitigation of climate change and the creation of livelihoods and income generation for rural people. However, the production of biofuels may have adverse environmental impacts if not applied in a sustainable manner. The ASEM countries acknowledge the importance of integrating considerations for sustainability in the life-cycle of biofuels, and avoiding the destruction of sensitive and valuable ecosystems. Furthermore, development

of certification systems translating the corresponding sustainability impacts should be considered.

9. International Cooperation

The ASEM countries recognise the importance of the global effort to strengthen international environmental governance with a view to ensuring a more effective and integrated approach to the sustainable management of the World's natural resources. The sustainable management of ecosystems is indispensable for a sustainable global economic growth and for the fulfilment of the 2015 Millennium Development Goals.

The ASEM countries therefore call for enhanced and more coherent and efficient architecture to better address the wide-ranging environmental threats in a globalised world, so as to respond to the needs of all countries, including the needs of developing countries in achieving sustainable development and poverty eradication, avoid the present duplication of work and improving synergies between the principal actors.

10. The way forward

There is a need for a strengthened dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe on environmental issues including climate change and sustainable energy, and their relevance for other issues such as loss of biodiversity and deforestation, sustainable consumption and production, and sustainable natural resource management.

Moreover, the ASEM countries will bring the conclusion of this meeting forward to the CSD15 and ongoing work under the UNFCCC and other relevant fora.

The ASEM environment ministers agree that the results of this meeting in Copenhagen (24.-25. April 2007) would be presented at the 7th ASEM Summit meeting in Beijing in October 2008.