

Chairperson's Summary

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The 9th Northeast Asian Conference on Environmental Cooperation 26-28 July 2000

1. The 9th Northeast Asian Conference on Environmental Cooperation (NEAC) was held from 26 to 28 July 2000 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The Ministry of Nature and Environment of Mongolia organized the conference with support from the Government of Japan. The delegates from the People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia and the Russian Federation attended the conference. The participants included senior officials and experts from central and local governments, research institutions, and NGOs. In addition, representatives from UN/ESCAP, UNEP and UNDP attended the conference.
2. The Conference was opened with a welcome speech made by Mr. Banzragch, State Secretary of the Ministry of Nature and Environment of Mongolia. Following his remark, representatives of each participating country, UNESCAP and UNEP made their keynote speeches.
3. The subjects discussed at the 9th NEAC were as follows:
 - a. Forest Protection and Afforestation;
 - b. Water contamination and Purification;
 - c. Extension of Network of Special Protected Areas and Capacity Building;
 - d. Review and Future of the Northeast Asian Environmental Cooperation.
4. For the first session on Forest Protection and Afforestation, the representatives from each country made presentations on the topic. Various issues related to the topic were addressed during the presentation and discussion, including national strategy and actions on forest protection and afforestation; responsibility of government and NGOs to protect forests in Asia; research on the impact of forest fire and regeneration of forest; re-forestation activities; and problems, positive trends and priority areas on forest protection and afforestation. The participants noted that each country attached great importance to forest protection and afforestation and is making great efforts to take further actions. Taking into consideration the global and regional dimension of the problems, it was emphasized greater attention and efforts should be paid to combat deforestation and desertification in the Northeast Asian region. Many participants emphasized that problems of ecosystem should be tackled in an integrated and long-term prospective in cooperation with international organizations such as UNEP, UN/ESCAP, UNDP, ADB and World Bank.
5. During the second session on "Water Contamination and Purification," each participating country presented a report on the current water environment situation, policy and prospects in their country. The reports included measures to enhance water pollution control through administrative approach, water quality improvement system in cities, water environment restoration system using bio-ecoengineering and international cooperation for water purification. In addition, suggestion, in order to share relevant policies and information, was made to establish an expert network for water pollution control and expertise among the participating countries, which may

supplement the ongoing activities, such as NEASPEC project on air-monitoring data and training; NOWPAP. The representative of UNEP informed the participants of UNEP's ongoing project "Global International Water Assessment (GIWA)" and requested NEAC countries' cooperation.

6. The third session was on the "Extension of Network of Special Protected Areas and Capacity Building" and the delegates from each country made presentations on the topic. The conference exchanged views on the topic including the necessity of regional level cooperation, in particular for capacity building in this area, the possible creation of trans-boundary protected areas and among the relevant participating countries, and the organizing of expert group meetings to deepen discussions on this topic.
7. Session 4 was on the "Review and Future of the Northeast Asian Environmental Cooperation." Based on the presentations made by each country representatives, the Conference exchanged views on the NEAC's achievements, roles and objectives, and future prospects. Its main achievements include pioneering policy dialogue in the sub-region, promoting dialogues among a variety of entities, exchanging of information in a wide range of environmental issues, including new emerging issues, and functioning as catalyst to promote new cooperative initiatives in different formalities.
8. The Conference agreed to develop new directions/principles of NEAC, taking into consideration a necessity to forge a mutually beneficial linkage with ongoing environmental cooperation initiatives in the Northeast Asian region. The Conference noted with appreciation the submission by the Ministry of Environment of Republic of Korea, for their draft "Framework of NEAC", which is annexed to this Chairperson's Summary for further elaboration. The NEAC focal point in each participating country is requested to continue coordination, *inter alia* via Internet, to review the present document, for possible adoption on the consensus basis at the next NEAC meeting. The Ministry of Environment of Republic of Korea and the Ministry of Environment and Nature of Mongolia will jointly serve as secretariat for this process.
9. The Participants shared the view that NEAC should continue its present function as a free and open policy forum with wider participation of various stakeholders, such as local governments, NGOs, and research institutes.
10. The participants expressed their deep appreciation to the Ministry of Nature and Environment of Mongolia for its warm hospitality and successful organization of the 9th NEAC.
11. The participants welcomed the offer by the Korean delegation to host the 10th NEAC in October 2001 in Incheon City of Republic of Korea. The date, duration, and agenda of conference would be decided by the hosting country in collaboration with other participating countries at least three months prior to the meeting.

Framework of NEAC

A. Objective

(1) As environmental degradation accelerates throughout the region, and as it becomes clear that lasting solutions require increased involvement from local governments, the private sector and the public, the main objective of NEAC should be to promote free discussion and policy exchange, and to enable access to useful, accurate information at all levels.

(2) Through these activities, NEAC is aimed at contributing to effectively cope with domestic and regional and global environmental problems, such as air pollution, nature conservation, and water and waste management, and to ultimately lower pollution throughout North-east Asia.

B. Roles

(3) The NEAC should play several roles. Through the NEAC Mechanism the participation of various stakeholders can be enhanced. These include environmental institutions, local governments, and NGOs as well as relevant government ministries and agencies.

(4) Since it is largely a forum for maintaining an open policy dialogue, it serves as a basic foundation for other environmental programs. Its ties to other conferences and programs such as TEMM and NEASPEC should therefore be strengthened. To this end, host countries will present information and results generated through NEAC at the following TEMM and NEASPEC meetings. The host country will take measures to share NEAC's outcomes, such as publishing and reporting the presentation documents and agreed results.

(5) Considering the timing of conferences of similar programs, it is possible to promote various measures for providing TEMM and NEASPEC chances for holding interim reviews and expert group meetings in specific areas, such as transboundary air pollution, nature conservation and biodiversity, within NEAC's framework.

C. Participating and Hosting Countries

(6) Six Northeast Asian Countries--China, D.P.R. of Korea, Japan, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea, and Russia--will join this conference as member countries.

(7) Member countries would host NEAC meetings in turns. However, in case of special circumstances the venue can be changed by the conference participants.

(8) The host country would cover the expenses of two participants from each member country.

D. Agenda and Activities

(9) It is recognized that review activities are very important to examine the progress of domestic and regional measures according to outcomes of previous meeting.

(10) The conference consists of four sessions. Each session's agenda will include various environmental issues in Northeast Asia, and would be adopted in the previous meeting. In order to provide a policy basis for other environmental programs, approval items and ongoing projects of other environmental mechanisms can be considered in the process of selecting the agenda of NEAC meetings.

(11) In collaboration with local governments and private organizations, host countries can organize special activities, such as public symposia and exhibitions.