

Keynote Speech

Keynote Speech, 12th NEAC

Progress and Prospect on Environmental Conservation in China

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Mr. Chair-person, ladies and gentlemen:

Good morning.

I am very pleased to be here at the 12th Northeast Asian Conference on Environmental Cooperation. Thank you for inviting me and my colleagues to this important conference. First of all, please allow me, on behalf of the State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) of the People's Republic of China, to extend our sincere congratulation to the opening of the Twelfth Northeast Asia Conference On Environmental Cooperation (NEAC) here in Toyama of Japan. I also would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Government of Japan for hosting and organizing this conference. I wish to get to know more friends here so that we could coordinate for the betterment of environmental cooperation in Northeast Asia.

Northeast Asia is abundant with natural resources and has a great human resource potential. Together with the political will of all countries concerned, and the fact that it lies close to some of the world's fastest growing and biggest

economies, this region is likely to become one of the largest international development centers. As a result, there is a long-term potential to attract investments for infrastructure, natural resource development, industry, mining, oil exploration, and urban development. However, the industrial and economic development will also bring new dangers, and unless mitigation strategies are implemented, growth in this region will threaten the regional environmental resources.

The 11th NEAC, as hosted by China, was held in Hainan, China, in December last year. It was a fruitful meeting where representatives from Japan, Korea, Russian Federation, Mongolia and China had in-depth discussions on regional environmental issues. I wish that the meeting this year would further enhance the open discussions among the member countries and facilitate the environmental cooperation in the region.

Here, I would like to take this opportunity to give a brief overview of environmental protection and sustainable development in China in general and also the situation in the past year.

In the new century, China will continuously maintain a high economic growth rate: national economic output is expected to double in the next 10 years. Along the process of economic restructuring and economic development, China will face challenges from both domestic and global environmental concerns. With a huge population, below-average per capita share of natural resources, insufficient infrastructure and fast-paced urbanization, China's social and economic development in the 21st century, which includes such grand

projects like the great western development, water diversion from south to north, Beijing's 2008 Olympics, and China's entry the WTO, will be greatly hindered by the already-deteriorating ecological environment. In order to maintain a fast and healthy economic development and gradually improve the environmental quality, China has established compatible environmental protection goals in the next few years:

- At an economic growth rate of 7%, the total discharge volume of major pollutants will be reduced by 10% from 2000 to 2005;
- A 20% reduction of SO₂ emission within the acid rain control zone and SO₂ control zone from 2000 to 2005;
- A 60% water reuse rate in the industrial sector; an average domestic sewage treatment rate of 45% and 60% in cities with a population of greater than 500,000. This is equivalent to an increase of daily domestic sewage treatment capacity of 26 million tons.
- The comprehensive solid waste utilization rate will reach 50% and the urban waste disposal rate will reach 65%.
- Approximately 13% of national land will be protected by nature reserves.
- The program of forest/grassland reclamation from cultivated land will be continued;
- Environmental quality at key river basins, regions, coastal areas and cities will be improved.
- Water quality of the "Three Gorges" reservoir and water diversion project from south to north will meet their planned goals.

These goals can only be achieved through sustainable

development and its implementation in various sectors:

- Industry: along the process of industrial restructuring, clean production will be further promoted, together with industries of high efficiency and environmental friendly products. Eco-park demonstration projects will be established and new sustainable economic development models will be experimented.
- Agriculture: traditional farming practice will be improved toward ecological, organic and water-conservation farming, green and organic food products will be developed.
- Urban development: urban planning will focus on the creation of a clean and comfortable environment for citizens. More environmental infrastructures like wastewater and solid waste treatment plants will be constructed. Emission from mobile sources will be further controlled.
- Rural development: the priority will focus on raising the level of environmental awareness of farmers. More environmental-friendly towns and villages will be constructed.
- Ecological protection: more ecological special function zones and priority natural resources areas will be established and protected. Ecological demonstration projects will be established.
- Great western development program: Ecological management and protection will be enforced along the development

process. Forest/grassland reclamation will be further implemented.

In 2002, China has made remarkable achievements in pollution prevention and control. Discharge of major pollutant in 2002, namely sulfur dioxide, smoke, industrial dust, COD and industrial solid waste has reduced at 10.3%, 26.1%, 35.3%, 10.3% and 58.9% respectively, as in comparison with those of the year 1998. Pollution in main streams of Huaihe River has been markedly reduced and degradation of water quality in Taihu Lake and Chaohu Lake has been primarily under control. Eutrophication in Dianchi Lake has been primarily curbed. Remarkable achievements have also been made regarding pollution prevention and control in the "Dual Control Area". In 2002, cities graded as level two for sulfur dioxide concentration have reached 56.9% of the total in sulfur dioxide control area, a remarkable increase from the 32.8% in 1998. Precipitation acidity in acid rain control area has been in decrease. The project for pollution prevention and control in Bohai Sea has been initiated.

On the other hand, conservation of ecology and environment in China has been further strengthened. Protection and construction of ecology and environment have been identified as key component in developing the western areas. The project on protection of natural forest resources has been initiated and other initiatives include restoring farmland to lakes and forests, immigrations for ecological considerations, etc. Investigations on ecology and environment in western and middle part of China have been completed. By the end of 2002, 5,027,500 hectares of forest have been cultivated as a result of the project on protection of natural forest resources, and

5,831,000 hectares of forests have been restored from farmlands. New achievements have been made in construction and management of natural reserves and bio-diversity protection. By the end of 2002, 1757 natural reserves have been established, a total area of 132,950,000 hectares that accounts for 13.2% of the territory. Environmental protection in rural areas are attached great importance. Stubble burning is banned and comprehensive resource utilization is promoted.

As a country of profound environmental indications and liabilities, China has actively initiated the strategy for sustainable development. The legal system for sustainable development has been primarily shaped, with over 20 laws and 100 regulations issued regarding environment and resource protection. Further to the National Report on Sustainable Development published right before the World Summit on Sustainable Development last year, the Action Plan for Sustainable Development in the Beginning of 21st Century was published in July, 2003. As a result that the strategy for sustainable development is implemented, active progress has been made in the strategic reform of industrial structure, rapid population growth has been controlled, resource consumption and pollutant discharge per capita has been in decrease, which have all contributed to the continuous, rapid and healthy development of national economy. Despite of the great achievements China has made in society and economy, China is still in the extensive mode for economic growth, with pressures from population growth, shortage of resources and environmental degradation. Therefore, it still remains the long-term priority for China to eradicate poverty, achieve economic growth, improve the living standard and ease the burden from environmental pollution.

Experiences from the years have proved to us that cooperation

at international level, and regional level in particular, is essential in further facilitating sustainable development as supported by social progress, economic growth and environmental protection. NEAC has, since its establishment, been serving as a major mechanism for environmental cooperation within the region. Member countries have been in cooperation through the years and NEAC has further provided an effective and helpful communication channel, which enables research on regional environmental status and prioritizing key areas for regional cooperation. Environmental protection and sustainable development in the region have been actively enhanced as a result of discussions and policy cooperation on issues of regional population, human resource development, natural resources, resource development, environmental risks and international cooperation on environmental protection. China will participate, in a more active manner, in environmental cooperation within the region. We sincerely wish that our cooperation under NEAC would help to improve the environmental status within the region, bring changes to the present production mode and pave the way for sustainable development among all members.

At last, I would like to wish this meeting successful and fruitful.

Thank you!

“Environmental Policy Development in Japan”

Kazuhiko TAKEMOTO

Deputy Director-General
Global Environment Bureau
Ministry of the Environment

1. Introduction

2. Recent Policy Development in Japan

- (1) Follow-up of WSSD
- (2) Climate Change
- (3) Environmental Education
- (4) Sound Material-Cycle Society
- (5) Air Quality Management
- (6) Water Quality Management
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- (8) Bio diversity

3. International Cooperation

- (1) Acid Deposition / Dust and Sandstorms (DSS)
- (2) Marine Pollution Prevention
- (3) Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)
- (4) Local Governments' Initiatives

4. Conclusion

1. Introduction

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I am pleased to welcome all the participants to the 12th Northeast Asian Conference on Environmental Cooperation (NEAC). Taking this opportunity, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Toyama Prefecture Government and Toyama City Government as well as the Northwest Pacific Region Environmental Cooperation Center (NPEC) for their supports, which make this conference realize in a smooth manner.

As you have already noted, we started the NEAC in 1992 and we convene it every year since then. I would like to underline that this initiative has been developed by strong participation and enthusiastic commitments of each country in close collaboration of UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. It is very important for us to exchange information on and experiences in environmental policy development and to discuss our common interests including regional cooperation through this regular meeting.

I am very pleased to share with you our initiatives in developing environmental policies in Japan.

2. Recent Policy Development in Japan

(1) Follow-up of WSSD

In September last year, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) concluded with the following outcomes; (a) Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), (b) Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, and (c) Type II Partnership Initiatives. We are now getting into the implementation phase to follow up these commitments.

I would like to highlight our initiative on sustainable consumption and production as one of outstanding examples. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation encourages the government to develop a 10-year framework of programmes in support of accelerating shift towards sustainable consumption and production. In line with this, the government of Japan formulated the “Basic Plan for a Sound-Material Cycle Society” as a 10-year framework of program. I will touch on this later in more detail.

(2) Climate Change

Japan ratified the Kyoto Protocol in June last year. In order to meet our Kyoto targets, we have implemented policies and measures based on the Guidelines to Address Global Warming. The Guidelines were decided by a Cabinet-level Task Force, consisting of all relevant Ministers and chaired by the Prime Minister.

(3) Environmental Education

At the WSSD, Japan proposed the “Decade of Education for Sustainable Development”. The UN General Assembly adopted this proposal last December.

In Japan, a new Law on Promotion of Environmental Education was enacted last July to further support NGOs, citizen groups and private sectors in developing their activities in environmental education. The implementation of this Law will be able to contribute to the preparation for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, which will start in 2005.

(4) Sound Material-Cycle Society

As stated before, the government of Japan made a cabinet decision on the “Basic Plan for Sound Material-Cycle Society” last March. A “sound material-cycle society” is defined as a society in which the consumption of natural resources is minimized and environmental load is reduced as much as possible. In light of this, the Basic Plan decides quantitative targets for the indicators on resource productivity, recycling rates and the amount of final waste disposals.

We are now getting into the implementation phase of this Basic Plan in collaboration with relevant stakeholders including local governments, citizens, NGOs and private sectors.

(5) Air Quality Management

To address air pollution in the urban areas, Japan decided to introduce the most stringent regulations in the world to control emissions from diesel-powered vehicles from 2005.

I am pleased to report that the “International Conference on Environmentally Sustainable Transport in Asia” was organized in Nagoya last March to discuss the desirable transport in Asia. Following up the outcome of this conference, “Policy Dialogue on Environment and Transport in Asia” is scheduled for next January in Manila.

(6) Water Quality Management

The government is working intensively to cope with organic pollution, which is addressed by the comprehensive measures to reduce total organic pollutant loads and the control of wastewater effluent into enclosed waters. Japan has to implement comprehensive measures for not only water quality, but also water quantity and the conservation of waterfront ecosystems. It is very important to realize sound water cycle.

The Third World Water Forum was held in Kyoto and neighbor Cities last March. Japan would like to work together with international community to implement the projects listed in the Portfolio of Water Actions, which is one of the outcomes of the Ministerial conference. Following up the outcome of this Forum, the Water Environmental Partnership in Asia (WEPA) has been proposed to assist the countries, for their planning and implementation of policy and measures to conserve water by developing a database on water environment. The inception workshop of WEPA will be

held in next year to discuss the project's framework and involvement of stakeholders.

(7)Chemicals

In order to avoid environmental risks caused by chemical substances, the Law on PRTR was enacted in 1999. This Law requires the enterprises to take further actions on their chemical management through reporting system.

In addition, the Law on Assessment of Chemical Substances was amended last May to incorporate the dimension of ecosystems into the chemical assessment process.

(8)Biodiversity

Biodiversity is one of the most important policy agenda in Japan. The “New National Strategy on Biodiversity” was decided at the Cabinet-level Task Force in 2002. The strategy sets forth three objectives; namely (a) strengthening of conservation, (b) restoration of nature, and (c) enhancement of sustainable use.

We are now preparing for legislation to cope with alien species. At the same time, the government is intensively working to mitigate the impacts of certain alien species in the hotspots.

3. International Cooperation

Now I would like to introduce the progress on the international cooperation in this region.

(1)Acid Deposition / Dust and Sandstorms (DSS)

The Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET) started in 2001 with the participation of relevant countries in this region. Japan would like to continue to commit itself to this Network. I am pleased to share with you that the Intergovernmental Meeting of EANET is scheduled for this week in Bangkok to discuss important issues including future financial arrangement. I wish this Meeting a successful outcome on these subjects.

In regard to dust and sandstorm (DSS), we are updated of this issue through the Symposium of this morning. I am grateful that the ADB-GEF project on DSS in Northeast Asia started last April with the participation of four countries such as China, Korea, Mongolia and Japan, along with four international organizations including UNEP. Japan would like to continue to support this project as much as possible.

(2)Marine Pollution Prevention

It is very important to implement the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP) for the conservation of marine environment in this region. For that reason, it is essential that a Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) should be established as soon as possible. Korea and Japan have been working to co-host the RCU for host country agreements with

UNEP. I am pleased to share with you that Japan already signed an agreement on the RCU Toyama office last September.

In regard to the regulation of waste dumping, the 1996 Protocol under the London Convention is likely to enter into force in a couple of years. In light of this, Japan is preparing for necessary amendment of current regulations to ratify the Protocol.

(3)Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)

Japan ratified this Convention in August 2002 and is now developing the national implementation plan required by the Convention. We organized the East Asia POPs Monitoring Workshop to discuss how to monitor POPs contamination in this region.

(4)Local Governments' Initiatives

It is noted that local governments play an important role in developing international cooperation.

The Association of Local Governments in North East Asia Region (NEAR) is a good example. The Association consists of 36 local governments from six (6) countries in this region. The Association organized the international symposium on organic waste management in Korea last year. Another symposium was recently held in Russia to discuss river water quality. We are pleased to welcome these initiatives taken by local governments, who have experienced in overcoming serious environmental pollution.

4. Conclusion

As I have stated, Japan has made remarkable progress in developing environmental policies as you have in your county. However, we still have many agenda in front of us to achieve sustainable development.

In this region, I believe that we have common ground to address environmental issues. Therefore, I would like to underline the importance of the regional-wide cooperation among countries gathering here for this Conference.

Finally, I would like to conclude my presentation by wishing the conference a fruitful outcome through our active interactions.

Thank you.

Key-note Speech

Mr. Ji-Tae Kim
Director General
Bureau of Water & Wastewater Works
Ministry of Environment, Korea

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen!

It is a great honor and pleasure for me to join you today to discuss environmental policies and initiatives for sustainability in our region. I extend my appreciation to the Ministry of the Environment of Japan, the Northwest Pacific Region Environmental Cooperation Center, and the Overseas Environmental Cooperation Center for their hard work in organizing this conference. I also thank the city of Toyoma for her gracious welcome and generosity.

The importance of regional cooperation in addressing global environmental problems has been highly stressed since the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development(UNCED) held in Rio De Janeiro. This recognition did not go unnoticed in Northeast Asia; it actually led to the establishment of NEAC for stronger regional environmental cooperation. Since first meeting in 1992, NEAC has convened 11 times so far and enabled our countries to exchange views and share experiences on practically all environmental issues. Through NEAC, we have built a strong human resources network and promoted the spirit of solidarity for belonging to the same environmental community.

This year, we discuss dust and sandstorm, preservation of marine environment, recycling society, and environmental cooperation of local authorities. By exchanging information and gaining new perspectives, we can expect to enhance mutual understanding and improve relevant policies. Particularly, I believe that this morning's Public Symposium on Deterioration of Land and DSS has greatly helped to raise public awareness and support for the prevention of DSS, which has grown into one of the most serious environmental challenges in Northeast Asia.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to briefly introduce Korea's achievements and future plans for environmental policies.

Let me start by pointing out that in Korea, 46% of our entire population lives in the capital region, which takes up only 11.7% of the total land mass. Due to this concentration, the main focus of the Ministry of Environment is environmental improvement of the capital region. Starting in 2002, our Ministry has been implementing comprehensive measures to bring up air quality in the capital region to the level of environmentally advanced OECD countries by 2012.

These measures consist of total pollution load management, emissions trading, and mandatory manufacture and purchase of low-emission vehicles. They are now incorporated into a special air pollution control law and await passage by the National Assembly.

In terms of water quality management, Korea enacted special laws for the protection of the four major domestic rivers in 1999 and 2002. These laws provide for the establishment of riparian buffer zones, total pollution load management, application of the User Pays Principle, and non-point source management. However, enacting these laws was by no means easy. Although most stakeholders agreed that preventive and demand-side approach contained in the proposed measures would do much to safeguard the water resources, they remained unwilling to compromise their respective interests.

As a result, 420 meetings took place over five years among affected residents, experts, local authorities, environmental organizations, and the government. These meetings helped mediate stakeholder conflict and created the basis for developing practical and enforceable water protection measures. Through this experience, we realized that public participation and mutual concession is essential to successful policy-making.

Next, I would like to touch upon Korea's waste management. Our policies in this area were developed to reduce waste generation and facilitate recycling. One example would be the Volume-based Waste Fee System that requires each household to pay for the treatment cost of its own waste. The system, which went into force in 1995, has resulted in substantial reduction of domestic waste and also prompted people to become more conscious of their consumption activities.

Additionally, in order to promote recycling, Korea has been enforcing the Extended Producers Responsibility System since January 2003 on 15 products, including metal cans and electrical appliances. Details on EPR will be discussed at Session 2 tomorrow.

For sustainable land management, Korea will introduce the Strategic Environmental Assessment System that supplements Environmental Impact Assessment and Prior Environmental Review System. We have been performing environmental impact assessment on development projects above a certain scale; however, in some cases, assessment outcomes could not be adequately reflected in project development due to time difference. In light of this shortcoming, our Ministry makes efforts to establish a precautionary decision making procedure in which potential environmental impact is assessed at the drafting stage of major national policies and development plans.

Korea will also expand the Eco-labeling System to induce sustainable production and consumption. To encourage environmentally friendly business and consumption, we plan to enact the Green Consumption Promotion Act, stipulating the roles and responsibilities of each economic entity, from consumers to governments to enterprises.

Korea also strives to partake actively in the global and regional efforts to realize sustainable development. In addition to ratifying the Kyoto Protocol for global warming mitigation, we established intergovernmental committees to effectively implement the outcomes of the WSSD. We also collaborate with ESCAP, ADB, UNCCD, UNEP and our neighboring countries to prevent DSS in Northeast Asia. I believe that such action-oriented partnerships will help achieve sustainability in Northeast Asia, one of the most dynamic regions in the world.

Finally, I want to extend Korea's cordial invitation to the 8th Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council and Global Ministerial Environment Forum, which will be held in March 2004 in Jeju Island. This is the first time that the Governing Council is convening in Asia and we would like to ensure its success. This can be done only through your active participation and support.

Unlike other regions, Asia has so far been unable to pinpoint to a common environmental issue for discussion in the international context due to our different geographical, economic and social conditions. However, I believe that as a region with one of the most significant environmental and demographic problems, Asia owes it to our future generations and to the international community as a whole to bring our issues forward.

In this regard, next year's meeting can serve as a good starting point. I would like to let you know that Korea is currently talking with the UNEP secretariat to include desertification and DSS in Northeast Asia in the State of the Environment (SOE) report.

I hope that countries can individually and collectively make efforts to present our regional environmental agenda to the world for more effective resolution.

Thank you.

12 th NEAC
Keenote speech

Environmental Protection and International Cooperation in Russia

Mr.Sergey Tveritinov
Director, International Cooperation Department
Ministry of Natural Resources , Russian Federation

Mr.Chairman,
Ladies and gentlemen !

On behalf of the Ministry of the Natural Resources of Russian Federation I want to express out congratulations to the host country on the occasion of the opening of the 12th North East Asia Conference on Environmental Cooperation (NEAC) in Toyama, Japan. I also would like to thank the Ministry of Environmnet of Japan, Toyama prefecture and Toyama city as well as Northwest Pacific Regional Environmental Cooperation Center and the Overseas Environmental Cooperation Center for their contribution and work in organization of this Conference.

As it was pointed out before, the strong region cooperation give us not only an opportunity to exchange views and experience, but to resolve the global and regional environmental problems.

You remember the last Meeting of the North East Asia Conference on Environmental Cooperation. It was announced about arrangement of the Russian Federation to be a party of Convention on Desertification, and my colleague this morning informed you on this activity.

The morning symposium was really successful and showed us that only on the basis of the mutual cooperation it possible to solve transboundary ecological problems. And another important thing – it is so called “project approach”.

From this point of view and with your kind permission I shall briefly introduce the activity of the Russian Federation in environmental protection and nature conservation.

First of all, 65% of the territory of Russia in fact is not touched with the human activity, and this part of the territory is located predominantly in Asia. On the other hand, on the 15% of the territory the state of the environment does not meet the standards.

Russia plays a key role in maintaining the global environmental functions because the significant part of the biodiversity is represented on its territory with

various ecosystems, including 25% of the world forest resources that provide the sustainability of the global ecosystem.

The current environmental situation was discussed last week in Moscow in the course of the All-Russian Congress for Environmental Protection. The key issue of the Congress was a discussion of the Environmental Doctrine of the Russian Federation and elaboration on its base of the Action Plans of federal, regional and sectoral levels. It was also envisaged to elaborate and implement a set of the regulatory and support measures in the field of environmental protection and proper management of natural resources.

The main directions of the environmental policy are:

- sustainable use of natural resources
- reduction of environmental pollution
- protection and rehabilitation of natural ecosystems.

What are the ways and means of the implementation the national environmental policy?

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First. Further development of the state environmental and natural resources management;

Second. Regulative and legislative support and their enforcement;

Third. Economic and financial instruments;

Forth. Environmental monitoring and information;

Fifth. Scientific support. Environmental education and public awareness

Sixth. A civil society development;

Seventh. Regional environmental policy;

And the last, but from my point of view, not the least, - international cooperation.

In the framework of the international cooperation this year in Russia there have been held several important events which actually have contributed to the progress of the NEA cooperation.

1. World Conference on Climate Change. Round Table of Head of Delegations of Leading Countries. Moscow 29 Sept. -3 Oct.
2. International Conference in Khabarovsk "Environmental Protection in the NEA Region". The participants - Russia (Khabarovskiy krai, Chitinskaya oblast, Amurskaya oblast, Khabarovskiy krai, Evreiskaya oblast), China (Heiluntsyuan province), Mongolia (Central Aimak), Japan, Republic of Korea (Chunchonnam-do, Konkvondo provinces). The Conference addressed the most urgent problems of Amur River basin and response measures on its protection

needed on the part of NEA countries that was expressed in the Declaration approved by the participants.

3. 5th European Conference of Ministers “The Environment for Europe, 2003” in Kiev. May 22, 2003. National delegations of Western European and the Community of Independent States countries discussed and approved the Environmental Strategy of Countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia. The output of the Regional environmental cooperation. Russian delegation rendered support to the European Union Water Initiative launched by the WSSD.
4. On March, 5-6 2003 Ministry of Natural Resources RF held the High-Level Meeting on Water Initiative for 12 countries. There was stressed the need in development of mechanisms of cooperation and coordination for promotion of this partnership.
5. The bilateral relations with NEA countries has been marked with events - the visit of the Minister of Environment of China Xie Zhenhua to Moscow . The results of that visit have been reflected in the documents signed jointly by the Russian Prime Minister M.Kasyanov and the Prime Minister of Chinese People’s Republic. The meetings of the joint commission on Environmental Protection (Russian-Japanese, Russian-Chinese) have been held this year in Moscow.

For the near future there are planned the following activities:

- 1) Next year – Russia will chair the Arctic Council for the period 2004-2006.
- 2) In 2005 UNESCAP will arrange the Regional Ministerial Meeting on Sustainable development. Its Secretariat has already started the compiling the Agenda
- 3) As you know, Mr.Chairman in this December 17-19th in Moscow Russia will host the Meeting of the Senior Officials of the NEA to discuss environmental issues. Through the diplomatic channels we have informed the UNESCAP Secretariat.

We think it will be a good opportunity to start our discussion about the joint contribution (possibly the joint document) to the Ministerial Meeting

Thank you for attention.

STATEMENT BY REPRESENTATIVE OF UNEP

12th NEAC Meeting

24-25 November 2003, Toyama

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It gives me great pleasure and honor to be amongst you and to make a statement to this important meeting on behalf of UNEP.

As you know, there are several environmental cooperation mechanisms in this sub-region such as NEASPEC (Northeast Asian Sub-regional Programme for Environmental Cooperation), NOWPAP (North West Pacific Action Plan) and TEMM (Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting). Among others, NEAC provides the unique forum for participating governments, international organizations and other stakeholders.

The Northeast Asia is one of the most dynamic and diverse regions of the world. It contains one of the richest and most highly developed countries of the world as well as some of the poorer and underdeveloped countries and areas. It also contains the largest country in the world with one fourth of the world population and high economic growth.

Because of the dynamism and diversity, the Northeast Asia is the most difficult sub-region in Asia and the Pacific in terms of sub-regional environmental cooperation. There is no legal framework and no institutional body for environmental cooperation in this sub-region unlike other sub-regions such as Southeast Asia, South Asia and South Pacific. Therefore, NEAC provide us with the valuable platform for environmental cooperation in this sub-region.

Keeping the uniqueness of the Northeast Asian sub-region in mind, let me report to you some of our Office's important movements and activities in relation to this sub-region after the last NEAC Meeting in Hainan, China on this precious occasion.

First of all, I am pleased to inform the meeting that "Strategy for UNEP Asia and the Pacific 2003-2005" was developed in April this year by the leadership of the new Regional Director. The Strategy consists of four objectives: (1) Assist implementation of national, sub-regional and global priority environmental programmes, (2) Host a Regional Knowledge Centre, (3) Lead response to emerging environmental issues in the region, and (4) manage human, financial and physical resources to maximize effectiveness of delivery.

One of the important points of the Strategy is focusing on innovative mechanisms for collaboration with our partners to avoid duplication and maximize service. UNEP will advocate a segmentation of UN agency responsibilities to enhance collaboration and delivery. This acknowledges UNESCAP as the lead agency for leading the regional Ministerial Conference process; UNEP supporting sub-regional institutions and programming, and UNDP maintaining its national level coordination role.

There are lots of other important points in the Strategy, but in terms of time constraints, I have to omit to introduce them here. It would be appreciated if you could have a chance to visit our website to go through the Strategy paper, later.

Secondly, I would like to introduce to the Asia-Pacific Sub-regional Environment Policy Dialogue (SEPD) held on 19 September 2003 in Beijing. As you are aware, one of the major outcomes of WSSD is the emphasis on regional implementation through partnerships between governments and civil society. The political leadership has voiced the need for the region to reach a common position through policy dialogue. SEPD was established in response to this need, consisting of 5 Ministerial representatives and 5 eminent persons from the region, one each from one sub-region, respectively.

The establishment of SEPD is based on the Strategy's fourth objective. It was decided that the meeting should be held annually in order to provide consolidated Asia-Pacific views on global environment issues, regional inputs to global events and policy guidance for the effective implementation of UNEP's programmes in Asia and the Pacific.

Thirdly, UNEP China Office was newly established in Beijing last September. This office is a country office for China, coordinating various UNEP activities including GEF projects in China with the Government, in particular SEPA. However, in the future, this office is expected to upgrade into a sub-regional office for Northeast Asia. Again, please note that this also comes from the Strategy saying UNEP supporting sub-regional institutions and programming.

Fourthly, various projects are being promoted by the leadership of UNEP. One example is an epoch-making ADB-GEF project on Prevention and Control of Dust and Sandstorms in Northeast Asia. As introduced in the Public Symposium this morning, this is a collaborative project of 4 international agencies (UNEP, ADB, ESCAP and UNCCD) and 4 countries (China, Mongolia, Korea and Japan). In this Project, UNEP is the lead agency for regional monitoring and early warning network of DSS, one of two major components of the Project. DSS is shown as one of emerging environment issues in the region in the Strategy paper.

EANET (Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia) is also actively promoted by UNEP since the secretarial role was transferred from the Interim Secretariat at MOE of Japan to UNEP/RRC.AP at Bangkok early last year. The 5th Inter-governmental Meeting will be held this week in Bangkok just after this NEAC Meeting.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last but not least, let me remind you that the GC/GMEF (Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum) will be held late next March in Cheju, Korea. Although the GC/GMEF is a global event, some kind of regional focus, input or flavor is needed as this is for the first time in Asia region. I believe that all the above activities are related or linked to this milestone event to some extent.

UNEP would like to be actively involved in environmental cooperation in this sub-region in association with NEAC and hope to make as much contribution as possible to effectively addressing the urgent and important environmental problems in the sub-region. I thank you for your kind attention and for giving me this valuable opportunity to share with you the UNEP activities as a committed partner in managing the Northeast Asian region's environment.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.