

Opening Remark at 13th Northeast Asian Conference on Environmental Cooperation

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Mr. Xu Qinghua, Director General

International Cooperation Dept./SEPA, China

Dear Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,
Good morning.

I'm very glad to come to the Republic of Korea once again for the 13th Northeast Asian Conference on Environmental Cooperation (NEAC), which reminds me of four years ago, when I attended the Tenth NEAC held in Incheon. It was also the first time for me to learn about this important dialogue and exchange mechanism among environmental departments of the five countries. We held the twelfth NEAC in Toyama, Japan last November, when we exchanged our opinions on the progress of environmental policies, DSS monitoring and pollution prevention and control in respective countries. Since then, new progress has been made in regional environmental cooperation, especially in that of Northeast Asia.

Availing myself of this opportunity, I'd like to show our gratitude towards Korean Ministry of Environment for the elaborate organization and arrangement of this meeting on behalf of Chinese delegation. I also hope to make more new friends so that we can promote environmental cooperation in Northeast Asia through joint efforts.

Since 1992, NEAC has set up a platform for exchange and sincere dialogue between the five countries and relevant international organizations. It has drawn high attentions from each party.

At present, environment is one of the main regional issues confronting this region. The process of environment protection and sustainable development in China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mongolia and Russia is crucial to the future development of the entire region. The conservation of eco-environmental and promotion of

sustainable development in this region calls for concerted efforts and actions from the five countries and other relevant neighboring countries. The five countries are neighbors belonging to Northeast Asia, so we should make joint efforts and promote cooperation in environmental protection and ecological conservation.

In my opinion, environmental protection and sustainable development have become key elements in regional cooperation. As one of the most active areas in global economic and social development, Asia Pacific Region faces great challenges as how to promote the implementation of sustainable development policies and protect the environment on which human beings are dependent for survival through strengthening regional cooperation.

The experience of the past years reveals that in the process of regional economic and social development, effective solution to environmental problems and the enhancement of capabilities in sustainable development mainly lie in the decisions and actions of every government as well as the cooperation at regional or even global level.

China attaches great importance to regional environmental cooperation and believes that: Enhancement of regional cooperation has positive influence on the settlement of such global problems as climate change, biodiversity conservation, fresh water resources and desertification.

We agree to enhance regional dialogue on environmental policies and are committed to further understanding and practical cooperation through dialogue;

We are in support of extensive public participation in the process of regional environmental cooperation; listen to policy recommendations on the issues of environment and development in this region from various experts through communications at all levels.

We are willing to enhance the capabilities of China and other countries in region in terms of decision-making, management and technical support to address both regional and global environmental problems through cooperation.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to put forward the following basic principles about regional environmental cooperation for your reference:

First, we must enhance dialogue and deepen mutual trust in regional environmental cooperation. We should take advantage of various existing multilateral dialogue mechanism in the region to enhance mutual exchange, understanding and trust.

Second, we must stick to the principle of openness, tolerance and making steady progress in regional environmental cooperation. Development conditions of every country in this region vary, and so do the environmental problems and focal fields for cooperation. Therefore, we should adhere to the attitude of tolerance, openness and progressive development in regional environmental cooperation and the principle of more communications, better understanding, seeking for common ground while reserving differences in order to promote cooperation.

Third, we should seek for equality, mutual benefits and win-win cooperation. Equal treatment is the basis for sustained regional environmental cooperation. Equal attention should be given to the considerations and interests of each country irrespective of its size. The win-win situation should be regarded as the top priority in pursuing regional cooperation. Only when various parties achieve common agreement and progress can the environmental protection in this region enjoy the development in an all-round way.

Lastly, I wish this meeting a complete success and look forward to thorough exchanges on relevant problems with you all.

Thank you.