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Presentation

Brief

The NEA Area is endowed with extraordinarily rich natural resources including biodiversity. The high biodiversity of the NEA Area is not only important for the region itself but is also globally significant. The NEA area is home to hundreds of endemic plant species and some of the world's rarest wildlife species. These rich biological resources traditionally have served as the foundation for the economic and cultural life of the peoples of the NEA Area. Over the past decades, however, increasing human impact on this biological resource base has adversely affected the ecosystems of the NEA Area. As a result, sustainable management of biological and water resources of the NEA Area has emerged as a major challenge.

Therefore, Mongolian Government highlights environment and development issues in NEA areas and supports environment sound sustainable development in this international important region. The Government of Mongolia will support the implementation of all activities of NEA environment related project.

Regional Environment Issues

The most critical transboundary ecological issues in Northeast Asia are:

- Marine pollution;
- air pollution;
- Loss of biodiversity especially threats to migratory species,
- Forest degradation and sustainable development of Russian, Far East forests;
- Watershed degradation.
- Dust storm and yellow dust

Loss of Biodiversity

Biodiversity can be defined at various levels: genetic diversity across and within species; ecological diversity, that is, the variety- of habitats found within an area; and ecosystem diversity, or the diversity of functional roles played by various species within an ecosystem.

The Northeast Asia region is endowed with areas of high species biodiversity. It also suffers from biodiversity loss. In Japan, for example, over 700 plants are classified as threatened. Over 80 birds are classified as threatened in China and newly 80 birds in the ROK .

Countries in the region have adopted two approaches to conserving and restoring biodiversity. First, they have attempted to protect so-called flagship, threatened species such as the fast Asian tiger, the Panda bear, or the Crane. This approach is expensive and, due to the interdependence

between individual species and their habitats, is limited in what it can achieve. Measures employed under this approach include expanding legal protection afforded to designated species, developing management plans to protect them, and ex situ conservation in zoos and seed banks.

The second approach is to maintain habitat through networks of protected areas. The total protected area varies greatly between countries. Japan has the largest share of protected land, about 12 per cent of the total land area. On the low end are the DPRK, with 0.5 per cent and the Russian Federation, with 1.2 per cent (Table 4. 1). The existence of protected areas, however, may not guarantee species protection. The areas may be inadequate in the type and size of habitat required to allow species to co-evolve and to reproduce successfully. This situation may be the case especially when habitats cross borders. Moreover, personnel and financial constraints may undermine management capacities. This is especially the case in the Russian Federation. Finally, protected areas may not provide adequately for the livelihood for surrounding human populations whose activities impinge on the protected areas. For these reasons, some governments in the region are considering management strategies, which generate income from conservation activities, such as ecotourism and controlled harvesting.

One of the crucial transboundary issues of biodiversity loss is the threat to migratory species, especially migratory birds. The wetlands of Northeast Asia support over 150 species of water bird, including ducks, geese, and cranes..

Main Transboundary Issues in North East Asia

- Air masses transfer, yellow dust and sand storm and gases and aerosols of technogenic origin;
- plants seeds from one country to another;
- Transfer of the surface runoff partly during snow melting, rains, flooding;
- Dust storm distribution;
- Crossing the borders of separate groups of people, population, including pendulum movement of tourists;
- Crossing the borders of transportation facilities, including aviation, railway, automobile vehicles, river and sea ships;
- Cargo flows, including gaseous, liquid, general and bulk, fuel, foodstuffs and so on.
- Migration of wildlife species

Required Actions and Measures

1) Ecosystems conservation

There should be region-wide survey of natural ecosystems to identify areas to be protected and to take steps to conserve them within North East Asia basin. The survey will cover the distribution and abundance of animal and plant species, forest, and endangered species, etc. Based on the survey, integrated strategies and programmes for ecosystems conservation in the North East Asia area should be formulated and implemented by each member country, in cooperation with other neighbor countries and relevant international organizations.

2) Preservation of wetlands for migratory birds

North East Asia including the whole of Korean peninsula is valuable habitats for migratory birds. Because of urbanization and conversion of landuse, etc, wetlands in this region is being destroyed and diminished continuously and migratory birds are getting hard to find optimum habitats. It is urgently needed to take national and region-wide measures to protect and conserve the wetlands for migratory birds.

1. Transboundary air pollution transfer

- ❖ Make a detailed assessment of atmospheric circulation
- ❖ Identify the main regional sources of yellow dust and sand storm (set up network)
- ❖ Cooperate in reduction of GHG emissions.

2. Transboundary water pollution transfer. International aspects of freshwater shortage.

- ❖ Make a detailed assessment of hydrological regime of the main rivers Amur, Kherlin rivers and costal areas
- ❖ Determine a demand for drinking and technical waters as well as their sources.
- ❖ Conduct a detailed assessment of anthropogenic impact on the state of surface and underground waters in the region.
- ❖ Strengthening a network to monitor surface and underground waters composition.

3. Establishment of regional cooperation mechanism

North East Asia environmental cooperation body is urgently needed for consultation and development/implementation of environmental baseline survey and a master plan to protect the North East Asia area by countries in this region

There are three levels of environmental Regional cooperation can be fruitful:

- 1) National;
- 2) Regional;
- 3) Global

In broad terms, these three levels correspond to ecosystem (and/or economic) boundaries.

Global: Global ecosystems such as oceans, climate and the ozone layer require a global level of governance.

Regional Environmental cooperation on global issues can be effective:

- a Global agreement should exist,
- Regional Environment cooperation can be the institutional vehicle for implementation.
- regional cooperation can achieve a greater positive global environmental impact, for example, could help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions beyond what a nation could achieve on its own. If regional countries are large emitters, such reductions could have a significant global--as well as regional--environmental impact.

Regional: Geographically bounded regions often contain whole or the large part of ecosystems such as Amur riverwatersheds, yellow sea, Japanese sea and habitats of migratory birds, fish and mammals etc. Moreover, many kinds of cross-border air, water and land pollution, including environmental governance alone cannot effectively manage such resources.

Regional cooperation can help to promote ecologically sustainable economic development by generating common regulatory frameworks, which include positive trade-related incentives for environmentally sound management. Regional institutional frameworks are required.

National: Many ecosystem boundaries are local and require national or sub-national management.

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