

Joint Communiqué
The 26th Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting
Among China, Japan, and Korea
28 September 2025, Yantai, China

Preamble

1. Minister HUANG Runqiu of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment of the People's Republic of China, Minister ASAO Keiichiro of the Ministry of the Environment of Japan, and Minister KIM Sungwhan of the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea convened in Yantai, China on 28 September 2025 for the 26th Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting (TEMM26).

Latest Development of Environmental Policies in the Three Countries

2. The Ministers shared recent progress in environmental policies in each country since TEMM25. Minister HUANG presented “Embarking on A New Journey for C-J-K Environmental Cooperation, Jointly Making Greater Contributions to a Clean and Beautiful World”, Minister ASAO presented “Review and Outlook of Major Environmental Policies in Japan”, and Minister KIM presented “Transition to Decarbonized Green Civilization from Carbon-based Civilization”. They shared the recognition that such efforts of the three countries will contribute to achieving sustainable development in Northeast Asia as well as to solving national, regional, and global environmental problems.

Recent Progress in the Implementation of the Tripartite Joint Action Plan 2021-2025

3. The Ministers reviewed the progress in implementing the Third Tripartite Joint Action Plan (TJAP 2021-2025) since TEMM25. They expressed satisfaction with the progress of cooperation projects under the eight priority areas of TJAP 2021-2025 and are committed to continuing efforts to promote trilateral cooperation.

Air Quality Improvement

4. The Ministers welcomed the 12th Tripartite Policy Dialogue on Air Pollution (TPDAP) held on 10-11 July 2025 in Niigata, Japan, which shared the latest expertise and technologies on Ozone and PM_{2.5} control and policies on atmospheric environment management. They appreciated the progress achieved in the TPDAP and other joint activities in line with the implementation of the Action Plan of the Second Phase of TPDAP among China, Japan, and Korea (2021-2025) and noted that a policy report highlighting the progress and outcomes of

the Action Plan of the Second Phase will be prepared. They also welcomed the adoption of the Action Plan of the Third Phase (2026-2030). The Ministers shared the recognition that such joint efforts including through TPDAP have substantially contributed to improving air quality in the three countries.

5. The Ministers welcomed the 17th and 18th meetings of the DSS Working Group I (WG I) held respectively on 10-11 October 2024 in Niigata, Japan, and from 30 June to 1 July 2025 in Seoul, Korea. They appreciated the successful completion of the 3rd Mid-Term Action Plan (MTAP) of WG I and welcomed the adoption of the 4th MTAP (2026-2030), especially in terms of collaboration with Mongolia. The Ministers welcomed the 17th meeting of the DSS Working Group II (WG II) held on 7-8 November 2024 in Gunsan, Korea, which reviewed the implementation status of the 3rd MTAP and discussed the development of the next MTAP. The Ministers welcomed that the 18th meeting of DSS WG II will be hosted by China in November 2025.

3R/Circular Economy/Zero Waste City

6. The Ministers welcomed the outcome of the 17th Tripartite 3R/Circular Economy/Zero Waste City Seminar hosted by Japan on 20 December 2024, which shared and discussed the policies, practices, and progress on plastic waste management, circular economy and zero waste city of the three countries.

Marine and Water Environment Management

7. The Ministers took note of the 20th Water Environment Partnership in Asia (WEPA) Annual Meeting and International Workshop held on 24-25 February 2025 in Lao PDR, which shared experience on water quality improvement, and ecological environment protection and restoration in watersheds, including the watershed in Gwangju Metropolitan City in Korea, the Ise Bay in Japan, and the Yangtze river basin in China. They also noted the 21st WEPA Annual Meeting held on 8-9 September 2025 in Malaysia, which focused on managing industrial wastewater to pursue compliance with regulations. In addition, they expressed their willingness to explore joint research and survey projects for strengthening marine litter response capabilities of the three countries.

Climate Change

8. The Ministers welcomed the 10th Forum of Carbon Pricing Mechanism in China, Japan and Korea held by China on 25-26 September 2025, which discussed the supporting role of carbon pricing mechanism in achieving the NDCs, and shared the latest developments, key measures, challenges, lessons learned, and prospect of carbon pricing practices within the three countries, and discussed the impact of carbon markets including international carbon

market under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. They expressed their willingness to promote cooperation in the field of climate change, including synergy between pollution control and carbon emissions reduction. The Ministers welcomed the 7th China-Japan-Korea Carbon Neutral City Forum hosted by China on 18 February 2025, which shared the latest progress in carbon neutral city development and carbon footprint policies in the three countries. They also welcomed that the 2025 International Symposium on Climate Change Adaptation was held on 23 July 2025 in Seoul, Korea, with the participation of Japan and China, in which three countries introduced their climate change adaptation programs and best practices at the national and subnational levels.

Biodiversity

9. The Ministers welcomed the outcomes of the 11th Tripartite Policy Dialogue on Biodiversity (TPDB) hosted by Korea on 26-27 August 2025, which discussed topics including National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan indicators and the 7th National Report, ABS, Cali Fund, and private sector participation. The Ministers also welcomed the outcomes of the Tripartite Invasive Species Expert Meeting held with the 11th TPDB, which shared information and confirmed future cooperation on countermeasures against invasive alien species.

Chemical Management and Environmental Emergency Response

10. The Ministers welcomed the outcomes of the 19th Tripartite Policy Dialogue on Chemical Management (TPDCM) and the Tripartite Expert Seminar on Chemical Management (TESCM) held on 17-18 July 2025 in Yamagata, Japan. The meeting shared the chemical management policies of the three countries, as well as techniques for chemical hazard testing and environmental risk assessment. The Ministers also welcomed the adoption of the renewed joint action plan of TPDCM for the period 2026-2030.

Transition to Green Economy

11. The Ministers welcomed the progress in the tripartite cooperation on Eco-labelling and appreciated that the Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) on indoor floor covering was signed in December 2024. They also welcomed the 22nd Tripartite Working-level Meeting on Eco-Labelling held on 11-12 September 2025 in Tokyo, Japan, which discussed the trilateral standards for LED lamp with a view to signing an MRA in December 2025.

Environmental Education, Public Awareness and Engagement

12. The Ministers welcomed the 25th Tripartite Environmental Education Network (TEEN) Symposium held on 26-29 October 2024 in Kyoto, Japan, which addressed “Bridging the Past, the Present, and the Future”. The Ministers welcomed that the 26th TEEN Symposium

will be held in December 2025 in China, with the theme of “Green Pathways: Innovating Environmental Field Studies for Ecological Citizenship”. The Ministers also welcomed the 22nd Tripartite Joint Environmental Training Program held on 5-8 November 2024 in Kitakyushu, Japan, with the theme of “Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency”.

Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat (TCS)

13. The Ministers welcomed the outcome of the 4th Forum on Carbon Neutrality Goals of China, Japan and Korea hosted by TCS in March 2025 in Shenzhen, China. The Ministers acknowledged the contribution of TCS under the framework of TEMM and welcomed continued collaboration with TCS in implementing TJAP 2021-2025 and TJAP 2026-2030, including its efforts through the 4th Trilateral Environmental Teachers’ Exchange Program (TTEP) to strengthen cooperation on circular economy education among the three countries.

Tripartite Presidents Meeting (TPM)

14. The Ministers noted that the 22nd Tripartite Presidents Meeting (TPM) among the Chinese Research Academy of Environmental Sciences (CRAES) of China, the National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES) of Japan, and the National Institute of Environmental Research (NIER) of Korea will be held in November 2025 in Guangzhou, China, and encouraged further strengthening of tripartite research cooperation to provide scientific reference for policy cooperation within the TEMM framework.

Promoting Cooperation on Major Regional and Global Environmental Issues

15. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening measures to address climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental pollution in light of their respective national circumstances; accelerate the transformation towards green and low-carbon development / the net-zero economy and society / a carbon-neutral society; promote harmony between humanity and nature; and pursue efforts to improve global environmental governance, so as to facilitate green recovery and sustainable, inclusive development.

Climate Change

16. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the Paris Agreement temperature goal of holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change.

Biodiversity

17. The Ministers committed to the swift, full, and effective implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF) adopted at the 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15), and encouraged other countries to do the same. The Ministers shared the recognition that invasive alien species have become an urgent issue in East Asia and confirmed continuing to share information and strengthening cooperation on the countermeasures against them.

Plastic Pollution

18. The Ministers took note of the efforts made at the second part of the fifth session of the INC (INC-5.2), and are committed to follow-up process and continuous efforts to tackle plastic pollution. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the development of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, based on a comprehensive approach in line with the mandate of UNEA resolution 5/14, with a view to completing the work at the third part of the fifth session of the INC. The Ministers also expressed willingness to continue and strengthen the policy and information exchange regarding circular economy and plastic waste management through seminars and other activities. They acknowledged the significance of strengthening scientific, technical, and technological knowledge with regard to plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.

Air Pollution in the Region

19. The Ministers took note of the progress of the cooperative activities of the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET) and the North-East Asia Clean Air Partnership (NEACAP), both of which contributed to air quality improvement in the region.

Trilateral+X

20. The Ministers noted the progress in cooperation among the three countries and Mongolia to reduce dust and sandstorms, and committed to continuing collaboration with Mongolia on reducing dust and sandstorms in East Asia. They also shared the willingness to promote “Trilateral+X Cooperation” to ensure that the benefits of the trilateral cooperation extend to other countries so that the three countries can prosper together with other regions. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to multilateralism and expected close cooperation among the three countries at upcoming major regional and global environmental conferences, including the UNFCCC COP30, CBD COP17, and relevant G20 meetings.

Adoption of Tripartite Joint Action Plan on Environmental Cooperation 2026-2030

21. Recalling the commitments made at the Trilateral Summits and stated in the Joint Declarations, the Ministers adopted the Fourth Tripartite Joint Action Plan (TJAP 2026-2030) which prescribes the vision, principles, and objective of the tripartite environmental cooperation for the period by 2030 and set out the specific actions and implementation plans in the following eight priority areas adopted at TEMM25:

Improving Environmental Qualities

- (1) Air Pollution & DSS
- (2) Biodiversity
- (3) 3R/Circular Economy/Zero Waste City & Plastic Pollution

Promoting Carbon Neutrality and Green Economy

- (4) Climate Change
- (5) Transition to Green Economy

Enhancing Environmental Welfare

- (6) Environmental Education & Awareness
- (7) Environmental Management of Chemicals
- (8) Living Environment

22. The Ministers shared the commitment to the successful implementation of TJAP 2026-2030 through combined efforts. They expected that carrying out the joint actions will contribute to achieving global goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement as well as to promoting green transformation in the region.
23. The Ministers agreed to submit the TJAP 2026-2030 to the 10th Trilateral Summit to be held in Japan.

TEMM Youth Forum & Tripartite Roundtable on Environmental Business

24. The TEMM Youth Forum and the Tripartite Roundtable on Environmental Business (TREB) took place as the side events of TEMM26 and the results of the discussions were reported to the Ministers. The Ministers welcomed the outcomes of the Youth Forum themed “From Initiative to Impact: Youth Empowerment Toward Climate Resilient Communities”, and those of the TREB themed “Towards Carbon Neutrality: Actively Responding to Climate Change and Promoting Green and Low-carbon Transformation”, which shared information on the efforts made by the governments and industries of the three countries to achieve carbon neutrality in the areas of green finance, circular economy, ESG, and international cooperation on green technologies.

TEMM26 Environment Awards

25. The Ministers congratulated and commended the winners of the TEMM Environment Awards. Dr. LI Xia from China, Dr. TANIMOTO Hiroshi from Japan, and Ms. SEONG Mie from Korea were awarded for their contributions to the tripartite environment cooperation.

TEMM27

26. The Ministers decided that TEMM27 will be hosted by Japan in 2026. The date and venue will be proposed by the host country and confirmed by Korea and China.

Closing

27. The Ministers expressed their satisfaction with the fruitful outcomes of TEMM26. Minister ASAO Keiichiro and Minister KIM Sungwhan expressed their deep appreciation to Minister HUANG Runqiu, the Chinese Government, and the Shandong Province for hosting the meeting and extending great hospitality to all participants.

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