

**The Fourteenth Asia-Pacific Seminar on Climate Change**  
**21- 24 September 2004, Sydney, Australia**  
**Chairperson's Summary**

1. The Fourteenth Asia-Pacific Seminar on Climate Change was held in Sydney, Australia on 21-24 September 2004. The Seminar was jointly organized by the Ministry of the Environment, Japan (MOEJ), the Australian Greenhouse Office (AGO) and the Overseas Environmental Cooperation Center, Japan (OECC), in close cooperation with the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Since its commencement in 1991, the Seminar has become well recognized as a major regional effort to address climate change and acted as a progressive vehicle for information exchange and mutual understanding among the countries through providing a useful framework for international cooperation in this field.

**I. Attendance**

2. The Seminar was attended by experts from nineteen (19) countries and representative of eight (8) UN and other international organizations. A number of resource persons from research institutes, universities and private companies also attended the Seminar,

**II. Objectives**

3. The objective of the Seminar included: 1) providing a forum for the countries of the Asia-Pacific region, as well as international organizations working in the region, and 2) sharing information and build relationships in an informal working environment.

Two common themes run through the sessions of 14th seminar.

*Cooperative approaches*, which would increase participants' awareness and understanding of the breadth of existing cooperative activities, forums and processes across the region, and identify opportunities to enhance or better utilize these.

*Lessons learned*, from successes and unexpected challenges in past and present activities and how these lessons could benefit the region.

**III. Conduct of the Seminar**

4. The Seminar commenced with opening address by Mr. James Shevlin, Branch Head, International and Strategies Branch, AGO and Mr. Kazuhiko Takemoto, Deputy Director-General, MOEJ.

5. The Seminar elected Professor Shuzo Nishioka, Executive Director, National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES) as the Chairperson. Mr. Kazuhiko Takemoto, Deputy Director-General, the MOEJ, Mr. Robert Owen-Jones, Director, Climate Change Section, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia, Ms. Li Liyan, Senior Programme Officer, National Development and Reform Commission, China, Dr. Nandita Mongia, Team Leader and Regional Coordinator for Climate Change,

UNDP-GEF Regional Coordinator Unit, Asia and the Pacific, Mr. Taito Tabaleka Nakalevu, Climate Change Adaptation Officer, Secretariat of Pacific Island Environment Programme (SPREP), Mr. Taka Hiraishi, Senior Consultant, the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), and Dr. Greg Picker, Manager-Multilaterals, International Climate Change Team, AGO chaired sessions of the Seminar.

#### **IV. Key Findings**

6. Participants of the Seminar identified challenges for the region and new opportunities for regional cooperation. Key findings of the Seminar are:

- Science plays a key role in informing our response to climate change.
- Adaptation is a serious challenge requiring urgent attention.
- There are opportunities for countries to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and achieve sustainable development objectives simultaneously.
- Practical measures to address climate change should recognize national circumstances and value local approaches.
- Innovative and sustainable approaches are necessary to achieve long-term solutions to climate change.
- Noting different national circumstances, active steps must be taken to maintain and extend human and institutional awareness and capacity to respond to climate change.
- Improving communication and coordination of activities across the region builds on synergies and identifies further opportunities for collaboration.

#### **V. Next steps for the Asia-Pacific Seminar on Climate Change**

7. Participants of the Seminar recognized the following steps should be taken in organizing the next Seminar;

- Continuation of ongoing dialogue on climate change, including at 15th Asia Pacific Seminar, with an emphasis on informal exchange of ideas and experiences.
- The 15<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Seminar may be held in conjunction with a UNFCCC workshop on Article 6 activities in the region.
- The AP-Net will be employed as an information dissemination instrument in organizing the Asia-Pacific Seminar

8. The next Seminar should have several sessions for which facilitators prepare relevant analytical work on cross-cutting themes, which would be circulated to participants in advance. This approach would enable sessions to be organized around a short presentation that summarizes key findings and enables a focused discussion.

These sessions would have a more specific focus on topics of interest throughout the region, taking into account discussions held in the 14th Asia-Pacific Seminar.

## **VI. Substantive Sessions**

### **Opening**

9. Participants agreed that the Seminar would focus on learning from the lessons from others and identifying opportunities for practical cooperation to address climate change in the region.

### **Session 1: Update on efforts**

10. Participants exchanged ideas and information about their domestic programs and approaches to climate change mitigation and adaptation in the region. It was recognized that the most effective and sustainable initiatives build on local knowledge and experiences.

### **Session 2: Capacity Building**

11. Active steps must be taken to maintain and extend human and institutional capacity across the region. Noting different national circumstances, participants identified two common barriers for capacity building activities in the region: the low levels of awareness and knowledge of climate change issues at the local level; and the need for greater access to technology and resources to help mitigate and adapt to climate change. To overcome these barriers in the future, participants identified three key methods: the importance of building capacity through partnerships and continued dialogue; the importance of learning from the experiences of others in the region through the sharing of information, ideas and experiences and; the need to ensure that parties sustain human and institutional capacities that have been built.

### **Session 3: a) Clean Development Mechanism and Joint Implementation (CDM/JI)**

12. This session updated participants with CDM/JI information, including methodologies approval status by the CDM Executive Board, the developments in technical and procedural issues, market trends and legal aspects, and current status of institutions in host countries along with efforts underway to promote CDM/JI projects. In order to promote CDM/JI activities in a more practical way, participants discussed the need for proposing new projects in view of the limited window of opportunities and the modality of information dissemination to assist investors and host country stakeholders. The discussion also touched on the importance of capacity building for CDM/JI for investors and host country stakeholders.

13. Participants expressed a strong hope to realize many CDM/JI activities in the region that would contribute to the sustainable development of host countries

### **Session 3: b) Global Environment Facility (GEF)**

14. The session began with an overview of the Global Environment Facility and the opportunities for accessing GEF funding in the region. It was highlighted that GEF funding is available for both

mitigation and adaptation initiatives. While there was some flexibility, the discussions clarified the proportion of GEF funding between various environmental issues and the roles of the implementing agencies – UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank. Participants outlined their experiences in implementing GEF projects at both the national and regional levels. It was noted that the enabling activities in most countries have led to further in-country actions to address climate change. The discussion highlighted the need for countries to ensure better coordination between departments when accessing funding from the GEF as well as other multilateral and bilateral donors. Participants identified that by sharing our experiences and ideas we can better identify synergies and build capacity both nationally and regionally.

#### **Session 4: Adaptation**

15. The session highlighted that we are all vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Many participants emphasized the importance of thinking globally and acting locally on climate change adaptation issues. The discussion referred to the confusion that often exists at the community, national and global level regarding the difference between short-term climate variability and long-term climate change. There was discussion that perhaps this issue could be considered at the COP as part of the workshop on adaptation. There was also acknowledgement that adaptation measures often related to issues beyond climate change and were difficult to distinguish from broader sustainable development planning measures. There was also discussion of the importance of both bottom-up and top-down approaches to climate change adaptation and the need for these approaches to be flexible in their design and implementation.

#### **Session 5: Science and Technology**

16. The session highlighted the central role that science and technology plays in enabling us to respond and adapt to the challenges of climate change. Participants discussed the issues relevant to technology development, transfer and deployment in the region as well as the importance of networking and linking the information and scientific advances that are occurring in the region. It was identified that there are a number of renewable energy and clean technology initiatives that have the potential for broader application throughout the region. Participants also discussed the importance of facilitating collaboration and research in the areas of climate change science and technology development, transfer and deployment.

#### **Session 6: Lessons Learnt**

17. Participants discussed key findings of the 14<sup>th</sup> Seminar and steps to be taken in organizing the Seminar in future. The outcome of the discussion is included in IV and V.

Chairperson of the 14<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Seminar on Climate Change

24 September 2004

Professor Shuzo Nishioka