

SPEECH BY
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Your Excellency, Madame Chairperson KOIKE, Yuriko, Minister of the Environment
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much, Your Excellency, Madame Chairperson for your invitation to the Congress, and an opportunity to address this distinguished gathering.

I highly appreciate the theme “Environmental Education” selected as the focus of the 12th Environment Congress for Asia and the Pacific.

Environmental education is one of 36 priority action programs included in the *National Strategy for Environmental Protection until 2010 and Vision toward 2020* approved by the Prime Minister of the Government of Viet Nam last December, 2003.

We – all of you and me at the regional and international environmental forums, used to urge the people on “*undertaking local action to protect the environment*”. But how can we encourage the local people’s participation in environmental protection while they are lacking in the accessibility to environmental education, knowledge and information.

This is a major challenge facing not only Vietnam but also other developing countries in our region. I think that all the regional countries should work together to create practically cooperative measures to help one another promote environmental education with the goal of providing opportunities for the local people to improve their awareness of, make changes in their attitude toward, and build up the environmentally friendly lifestyle.

Vietnam is looking towards knowledge based environmental and resource management approach, and therefore we welcome and give full support any regional initiative on environmental education. We are ready to cooperate with all the regional countries to materialize our goal on making Asia and the Pacific become a sustainable development region.

Thank you, Madame Chairperson.
Thank you.