

The Second Asia 3R Conference March 18–19, 2008 Tokyo, Japan Chair's Summary of Discussions

Introduction

1. This chair's summary is a record of the discussion of the second Asia 3R Conference prepared under the responsibility of the Chair of the conference, was not negotiated, and does not represent a consensus text.
2. The second Asia 3R Conference was held in Tokyo, Japan on March 18–19, 2008, hosted by the Ministry of the Environment of Japan (MOEJ). The Secretariat of the conference consisted of the MOEJ and the Institute of Global Environmental Strategies in Japan. There were eighteen participating countries from Asia (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam), six G8 member countries and a community (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom, United States of America, and European Commission), Australia, and six participating international organizations (the Asian Development Bank [ADB], Asian Institute of Technology [AIT], the Secretariat of the Basel Convention [SBC], the United Nations Centre for Regional Development [UNCRD], the United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific [UNESCAP]).

Opening Session

3. Mr. Yoshio Tamura, Administrative Vice-Minister of the Environment of Japan, delivered opening remarks on behalf of Dr. Ichiro Kamoshita, Minister of the Environment of Japan, emphasizing the importance of this Asia 3R Conference in providing valuable input regarding the 3Rs into the G8 Environmental Ministers Meeting in May and the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit in July 2008. He overviewed Japan's revised Fundamental Plan for Establishing a Sound Material-Cycle Society, currently expecting Cabinet approval. He highlighted the support at the ministerial level in Asia and the Pacific for advancing regional cooperation, such as by enhancing policy dialogues, with the aim of creating a shared vision of a sound material cycle society for the region. Finally, he emphasized Japan's leadership in

promoting the 3Rs internationally, including its support for the formulation of 3R National Strategies in Southeast Asia and support for the activities of the “3R Knowledge Hub.”

4. Mr. Hidetoshi Kimura, Director, Waste Management and Recycling Department, MOEJ, addressed the Conference on behalf of Mr. Hideto Yoshida, Director General, Waste Management and Recycling Department, regarding the background and objectives of the Conference. First he overviewed the development of Japanese solid waste management, the introduction of the fundamental plan for establishing a sound material-cycle society, and the development of indicators to promote a sound material-cycle society. He then described the development of the 3R Initiative and other international activities to create a sound material-cycle society. He then introduced Japanese contributions to Asia towards the establishment of a sound material-cycle society together with an action plan in Japan on this issue. Finally the discussion points on this conference were explained.

5. Mr. Kazuyoshi Okazawa, Senior Advisor to the Minister, MOEJ, was appointed as chair of the conference. In his remarks, he explained the background of the Conference, including the relationship with the G8 process, followed by a brief agenda of the meeting. Co-chairs of the Sessions were then appointed by the Chair as follows: for Session 1, Mrs. Wang Kaiyu, Division Director, Ministry of Environmental Protection, China and Mr. Hidetoshi Kimura, Director, Planning Division, Waste Management and Recycling Department, MOEJ; for Session 2, Prof. C. Visvanathan, AIT and Mr. Tsuyoshi Kawakami, MOEJ; and for Session 3, Mrs. Sunee Piyapamong, Pollution Control Department, Thailand and Mr. Kuniaki Makiya, MOEJ.

6. Dr. Kim Myung-ja, member of the Asia-Pacific Forum for Environment and Development (APFED), National Assembly member and Former Minister of Environment, Republic of Korea summarized the results of the APFED policy dialogue “Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and the 3Rs” held on March 17, 2008 as the following thirteen points: (1) policy, institutional, and human resource development should be further enhanced, (2) incentive/disincentives schemes should be applied, (3) financial and market mechanisms should be transformed, (4) corporate social responsibility (CSR) movement must be

capitalized upon, (5) the 3Rs must be integrated into ESD, (6) eco-labeling and information measures should be used more effectively, (7) 3Rs, climate change mitigation measures and ESD should be addressed in an integrated way, (8) sustainability values must be mainstreamed in university educational programs, (9) university pedagogy must be further developed to enhance various skills and abilities in order to better address sustainability, (10) awareness raising, capacity development, training, and education must be supported at the national, regional, and international levels, (11) youth involvement must be promoted, (12) technical cooperation should be facilitated, (13) policy research addressing socio-economic and political factors should be promoted to facilitate effective implementation of 3R policies and actions.

7. Dr. Katharina Kummer Peiry, Executive Secretary of the SBC, next made a keynote speech. After overviewing the Basel Convention and its Partnership Programme, she called for active participation of all stakeholders, especially from developing countries. She emphasized the clear potential for linkages between the Basel Convention and 3R-related efforts as well as the fact that Basel Convention and 3R-related efforts are fully consistent with measures for climate change mitigation and energy efficiency enhancement. Noting that waste-related issues are still not very prominent despite increased interest in environmental issues in recent years, she expressed her strong hopes for increased visibility of waste-related issues on the political agenda. It is with this objective that the 9th Conference of the Parties in June 2008 will have as its theme “Waste Management for Human Health and Livelihood,” highlighting waste management’s relevance to the health-related Millennium Development Goals.

Session 1: Development of 3R Policies and Increases in Resource Productivity

8. Session 1 addressed development of 3R policy and increases in resource productivity. The session began with overviews of key considerations presented by Mr. Taku Ohmura, ADB and Dr. Ir. Shamsudin Ab. Latif, Department of Environment, Malaysia. In the ensuing discussion, many participants presented examples of 3R-related policies and measures, notably those found in the ADB’s new 3R report “Toward Resource-Efficient Economies in Asia and the Pacific,” and highlighted Asia’s priorities and concerns as follows.

Prioritized Implementation of 3R Policies

9. Participants expressed the view that national governments should place the 3Rs as a priority issue. Also, the participants share the view that prevention of adverse impacts on health and environmental should be a precondition to promotion of the 3Rs, domestically and internationally. On the basis of this understanding, participants emphasized the need to protect human health and minimize environmental impacts from waste-related pollution, both from economic development and potentially from improper recycling and resource recovery activities. The 3Rs as efforts to promote improved waste treatment, increased recycling and reuse, and higher resource efficiency must take this into consideration.

10. It was noted that there are many good projects leading the way to environmentally sound waste management, reuse, and recycling going on in the region. However, further efforts are needed to support, disseminate, and increase the scale of such practices.

11. Policy frameworks with a clear plan and vision, such as national strategies, are important in strengthening implementation of the 3Rs, both in top-down and bottom-up approaches. Also, such frameworks are useful in firmly integrating the 3Rs in national economic and developmental strategy. Each country should promote the 3Rs in its activities according to its own conditions.

12. In this regard, political leadership as well as stakeholder collaboration will play an essential role. However, several delegates pointed out that awareness on resource efficiency and the 3Rs remains low among both political leaders and citizens in general. Inter-ministerial collaboration was mentioned as useful to promote the 3Rs. As one solution, it was suggested that there is a need to clearly show the linkages between the 3Rs and other issues now receiving higher attention by decision makers, such as human health improvement, poverty reduction, and climate change mitigation. In addition, there should be collaboration between local governments and businesses, including recyclers, to create an enabling environment for the 3Rs. Also, the benefits should be made tangible to civil society, with visible benefits to motivate participation, especially from poor citizens.

13. Economic instruments and other relevant policy measures can change lifestyles, expand business opportunities, and encourage private investment and innovation for promoting design for the environment and green products.

Increase Resource Productivity by Setting Targets and Promoting the 3Rs

14. It was generally recognized that a shift to a resource-efficient economy requires a paradigm shift. In this regard, participants had a common understanding that resource productivity improvement and natural resource conservation are of great significance. Having a shared understanding between developed and developing countries was viewed as an important first step towards a resource-efficient economy. Also, it was pointed out that efforts to improve resource efficiency can contribute to poverty alleviation.

Pursuit of Co-Benefits with Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions

15. Participants noted the importance of improving both resource efficiency and energy efficiency in Asia. In light of this, perspectives over resource and energy efficiency over entire products lifecycles are recognized as important. Also, the Clean Development Mechanism and other financial mechanisms for 3R-related projects are vital tools to promote financial benefits. Utilization of biomass, such as through composting of agricultural waste, can be one concrete example of pursuing co-benefits between waste management and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Session 2: Capacity Development to Support the 3Rs through Partnership with Various Actors

16. Session 2 addressed various considerations in capacity development and partnership. The session began with presentations by Mr. Albert A. Magalang, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Philippines, and Mr. Takeshi Yasuma, of Kagaku Busshitsu Mondai Shimin Kenkyuukai, a group of NGOs focused on issues involving chemical substances. Important points discussed by the participants were as follows.

Promotion of 3R-Related Science and Technology

17. In developing 3R-related capacity, it will be critical to have economic tools and policy measures such as standardization of information on recyclability of products; green purchasing; eco-labeling; and award systems to expand the market for 3R-related technologies and eco-design products. The participants introduced several examples of existing measures supporting technological development and innovation for the 3Rs and cleaner production, including governmental funding mechanisms for developing and importing technology.

Promotion of Activities by Businesses, Local Governments and NGOs

18. It was expressed by a number of participants that in implementing 3R activities it is essential to have cooperation and coordination among stakeholders as well as provide appropriate incentives for their active participation. Collaboration between central and local governments, involvement of NGOs in 3R-related projects and formalization of the informal recycling sector were some of the examples mentioned by the participants. Coordination of the roles of international organizations as well as among related ministries within individual countries was noted as fostering improvement. Promotion and replication of good practices were also stressed for 3R promotion.

Promotion of Information Sharing and Environmental Education

19. Many participants expressed the opinion that environmental education is key in promoting 3R activities from pre-school to the tertiary level as well as for teachers. Providing resources for such education as well as translating them into local languages are important. However, it was also confirmed that it usually takes a long time and significant effort to transition people's behavior from awareness to actions, and this gap should be filled by means of other measures, such as introducing pricing policy, providing infrastructure for recycling, and implementing regulation and enforcement.

20. Public disclosure of environmental information and provision of that in an easily understood form are also conducive to the promotion of 3R activities. Social pressure exerted by public information sharing is a good driving force to promote

environmentally-friendly behavior. For 3R-related business promotion, it was confirmed that provision of information on potential recycling markets would be essential to encourage the active participation of the business sector.

Session 3: Collaboration towards Sustainable International Resource Circulation

21. Session 3 focused on international collaboration. The session started with presentations by Dr. Chrin Sokha, Ministry of Environment, Cambodia and Ms. Kyung-Jin Hong, Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea. The ensuing discussions focused on the following major points.

Approach to Sustainable International Resource Circulation

22. The following set of principles was generally recognized by the participants as the basis for developing an approach to a sustainable international sound material cycle society, taking into account the different conditions existing in various countries: (1) build a sound material-cycle society by improving waste treatment and recycling capacity in each country, and to treat the waste, especially hazardous waste, in the countries in which the waste was originally generated, and at the same time, (2) develop and reinforce measures to prevent the illegal trade of wastes and recyclables, especially toxic and hazardous ones. Based on these two principles, countries may (3) facilitate the utilization of recyclable and reusable resources through international trade while ensuring the prevention of adverse impact, as a supplement to domestic resource circulation and with careful distinction between wastes and products.

23. To assure sustainable international resource circulation based on the approach mentioned above, the participating countries recognized the need to take the following points into consideration. First, there should be a general awareness of risks to the environment and human health associated with improper recycling of end-of-life products containing hazardous substances.

24. Second, since international resource circulation is driven by market forces, it was pointed out that market incentives may be useful to shift international resource circulation to become more environmentally and economically sound.

25. Third, for countries with insufficient capacity to manage hazardous materials in an environmentally sound manner, technology development and transfer and infrastructure building for proper recycling needs to be facilitated through international cooperation, including South-South cooperation. Also, especially for less-developed and relatively small countries, it was suggested that international take-back schemes may be developed to promote proper burden-sharing of waste management.
26. Fourth, to prevent illegal trade and promote sustainable international resource circulation, the participants noticed the need for proper procedures and criteria to control imports as well as for clearer distinctions between 3R-related goods, materials, or products on the one hand and wastes on the other. There are efforts already underway for capacity development of port authorities and customs officers to develop and properly implement such procedures and criteria.
27. Fifth, the principle of extended producer responsibility should be utilized to encourage producers to make their products more environmentally-friendly and to build local infrastructure and capacity for the recycling and reuse of end-of-life products.

Promotion of International Distribution of 3R-Related Goods, Raw Materials, and Products

28. On the topic of international distribution of 3R-related goods, materials, and products, the participants expressed their interest in developing an international system for sharing product-related environmental information which can be used both for new products and secondhand ones. Also, the need for further promotion of Design for the Environment, aiming at extended useful life and easy recycling, was emphasized.

Strengthening the Collaborative Efforts of Countries and International Organizations

29. To raise the priority of environmental policies, including the 3Rs, support from the

top political level is vital and the efforts need to transcend boundaries among ministries. It was also noted that financing to address particular issues is more readily forthcoming from donor countries and aid agencies when countries have identified those issues as among their priorities.

30. There is a growing need for international organizations and aid agencies working on 3R promotion to share information and coordinate their activities better. In the conference, several international organizations, particularly ADB, UNEP, UNESCAP, and UNCRD, shared information on the progress of their activities. The Conference participants confirmed their interest in further collaboration with the Secretariat of the Basel Convention and in activities for capacity development and information sharing, such as the 3R Knowledge Hub.
31. It was also recognized that one of the major issues for international cooperation is the need for the transfer of appropriate technology from countries with efficient technologies to developing countries based on a step-by-step approach.
32. In the Concluding Session, the participants, including representatives of NGOs, discussed the distributed draft Chair's Summary of Discussions. The chair presented a Chair's Note regarding the promotion of international collaboration for the 3Rs in Asia for discussion. The final version of the Chair's Note is attached to this document. Remarks were made by Mr. Hideto Yoshida, Director General, Waste and Recycling Department, MOEJ on behalf of Senior Vice Minister of the Environment Mr. Ikuzo Sakurai.
33. Participants expressed their appreciation to the Ministry of the Environment of Japan and the Secretariat for providing an opportunity to share activities and experiences on the 3Rs and exchange views to enhance the development of 3R policies. Participants reiterated their strong desire for ongoing 3R-related cooperation within Asia. They also expressed their high expectations for the results of this Conference to be input into the G8 process.

**Chair's Note regarding the
Promotion of International Collaboration for the 3Rs in Asia**

National Policy

The significance of promoting sound material cycles and resource efficiency is widely recognized by countries in the Asia and Pacific region, given the fact that most countries in this region are in the process of rapid economic development, and consequently confronted with challenges associated with increasing industrialization and urbanization. Obviously, further development of 3R policy is considered essential for sustainable development, particularly of emerging countries in the region.

As a matter of fact, many countries have adopted 3R policies as means for promoting resource recovery and waste reduction. However, the 3R policies that have been introduced vary from country to country because of the differences in social, economic, and cultural situations in each country.

Until now, in most of the countries in the region, recycling and reuse of end-of-life products have been conducted based mainly on market forces. Economically beneficial recyclables are collected and recycled by businesses, including the informal sector. Efforts to reduce industrial waste generation by improving resource efficiency in the production processes have also been made, only when it was considered economically beneficial.

In countries where recycling and reuse are driven mainly by market forces, capacity development of key stakeholders is of prime importance in making recycling and reuse more environmentally sound and in further improving resource efficiency. Transfer of technologies and information as well as assistance by international organizations and aid agencies are considered particularly essential for these countries.

In emerging countries of the region where the 3Rs cannot be carried out by market forces alone, more sophisticated policy measures are considered necessary. Such policies may include the following:

- a. Economic instruments, including the creation of markets for 3R-related goods and products,
- b. Promotion of partnerships among stakeholders,
- c. Education and awareness raising, and

- d. Mandatory recycling regulation and other legislative measures to promote the 3Rs.

In addition, economic incentives are considered useful in encouraging the 3Rs. In this context, waste-related CDM projects such as composting and methane gas collection from landfill sites may enhance the economic feasibility of such projects. It is important to note that these projects generate co-benefits, insofar as they not only achieve environmentally sound waste management but also reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Measures facilitating the replication of 3R-related good practices are considered useful in further promoting local 3R initiatives, particularly through partnerships with stakeholders including businesses, NGOs, communities, academia, and local governments.

Participating countries welcomed various programs and efforts taken by multilateral and bilateral organizations to promote the 3Rs in many countries of the region, and hope for further promotion of such activities in the future.

Regional Cooperation

There exists a basic understanding shared by participating countries regarding international resource circulation as a means to increase resource productivity in the region as whole.

To achieve proper international circulation of resources, it is important, as a first step, to increase the quantity and improve the quality of statistics regarding waste generation in each country as well as regarding exports and imports of recyclables. Such statistics will facilitate appropriate 3R-related policy development for the region. In this regard, continued policy dialogue among countries in the region is considered necessary to work out a harmonized definition of wastes and common standards for appropriate waste management and recycling.

Continued discussions are also necessary regarding international trade of 3R-related goods and products to ensure effective and sound material cycles in a regional scale. Proper attention needs to be given to the lack of capacity in some developing countries for appropriately handling 3R-related goods and products so as not to cause environmental or health problems.