

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT  
OF THE INAUGURAL EAS ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS  
MEETING**

(Ha Noi, Viet Nam, 9 October 2008)

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1. The Inaugural East Asia Summit (EAS) Environment Ministers Meeting was held in Ha Noi, Viet Nam on 9 October 2008. The Meeting was attended by the Environment Ministers or their representatives of the 10 ASEAN Member States, namely Brunei Darussalam, Kingdom of Cambodia, Republic of Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Union of Myanmar, Republic of the Philippines, Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Thailand, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, and Australia, People's Republic of China, Republic of India, Japan, Republic of Korea, and New Zealand.
2. The Meeting was opened by H.E. Hoang Trung Hai, Deputy Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, on behalf of H.E. Nguyen Tan Dung, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, who made the proposal to hold the Inaugural Meeting of the EAS Environment Ministers at the Third East Asia Summit in Singapore in November 2007, which was subsequently endorsed by the EAS Leaders. H.E. Hoang Trung Hai emphasised that humanity is facing serious challenges with climate change and environmental degradation. He noted that Leaders of East Asia Summit countries have expressed support for various regional efforts in order to effectively deal with those challenges, and that countries have a common objective to develop in a sustainable manner in the context of different natural, economic and social conditions. He urged participants to focus on common priority issues, and to collaborate in order to successfully meet common objectives.
3. The Meeting was co-chaired by H.E Dr. Pham Khoi Nguyen, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Viet Nam and H.E. Mr. Kazuhiko Takemoto, Vice Minister for Global Environment Affairs of Japan.
4. The Ministers recognized the importance of holding the Inaugural EAS Environment Ministers Meeting which provided them with a timely opportunity to exchange views on various issues relating to the environment, in particular actions contained in the *Singapore Declaration on Climate Change, Energy and the Environment* adopted by the EAS Leaders at their Third Summit in November 2007. The Ministers also emphasized that the Inaugural EAS Environment Ministers Meeting was

an important initial step (i) to actualize the visions of the EAS Leaders on environmental cooperation, noting that ASEAN as the driving force working with other participating countries in the EAS, and (ii) to discuss ways and means to put these ideas into practice through regional cooperative efforts and activities. The main theme of the Meeting was “Achieving Environmentally Sustainable Cities in East Asia.”

5. The Ministers stressed the important role of the EAS in taking action based on their capacity to address the challenges identified in various areas relevant to environmental issues such as capacity building, environmental education, climate change, biodiversity, natural disaster risks, coastal and marine ecosystems, safe drinking water and sanitation, sustainable forest management and urbanisation. They concurred that this action should be in line with the work being conducted under other relevant international forums, such as the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

6. The Ministers supported a phased and prioritized approach to implementation of the Singapore Declaration, while acknowledging the need to continuously take action on all areas of environmental protection. In this respect, the Ministers reached common recognition:

- (i) that “environmentally sustainable cities”, should be an immediate priority area as an initial step of EAS environmental cooperation, to address challenges posed by rapidly growing urbanisation and to contribute to addressing related issues in the areas of climate change, energy and the environment;
- (ii) that they would continue dialogue to identify further priority areas and to follow up on them while avoiding duplication with other international and regional bodies and sharing the outcomes from other cooperative activities in this region including Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA);

7. The Ministers further noted that for cooperation in the area of environmentally sustainable cities:

- (i) the existing ASEAN framework should take a leading role in the EAS collaboration, and that it was also important to invite contribution from non-ASEAN EAS member countries;

- (ii) countries' experiences, expertise and technology in areas such as (a) urban planning including environmentally sustainable transportation, (b) green building, (c) urban water supply and sewage treatment, (d) urban greenery, urban biodiversity conservation, urban landscape and urban amenity, (e) sanitation and waste management, (f) 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle) and improving resource efficiency, (g) air, noise, water and land pollution control, (h) co-benefit approaches to climate change and pollution control, (i) adaptation to climate change in cities, (j) urban infrastructure, and (k) reduction of natural disaster risks should be taken into account;
- (iii) the outcome of the *EAS Conference on Liveable Cities* in June 2008 in Singapore could serve as inputs for sharing experiences of member countries;
- (iv) EAS countries are encouraged to propose specific activities/project proposals in order to substantiate the EAS cooperation in the area of "environmentally sustainable cities".

8. The Ministers appreciated ongoing and new initiatives promoted by member countries such as "Low Carbon Society", "Compact Cities", "Eco-Cities", "Environmentally Sustainable Transport", "Clean Asia Initiative", "Asia 3R Forum", "Water Environment Partnership in Asia" and Asian universities network titled "ProSPER.NET". The Ministers encouraged synergies between such initiatives and EAS collaboration in the area of "environmentally sustainable cities".

9. The Ministers expressed concern over the adverse impacts, both immediate and long-term, of climate change, particularly in developing countries, due to anthropogenic causes and called for urgent and resolute actions by the global community to address the adverse impact of such climate change. The Ministers reiterated the commitment of the EAS countries, as indicated by the Singapore Declaration, to join hands with other nations outside EAS, as well as regional and international institutions to address climate change. The Ministers also renewed the commitment to the common goal of stabilising atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system, and reaffirmed their commitment to the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol as the core international mechanism for addressing climate change.

10. The Ministers noted Viet Nam's concept paper for setting up a centre for environmental education. The Ministers agreed that this is a useful initiative and tasked the senior officials to study the proposal further.

11. The Ministers also invited external partners (outside EAS) to assist and cooperate with EAS countries as they act on the above priority areas.

12. With a view to sustaining the momentum of the EAS cooperation on the environment, the EAS Environment Ministers shared willingness to endeavour to meet as necessary and that senior official meetings will be convened to prepare for the Ministers Meeting.

13. The Ministers directed the officials of EAS with the assistance of the ASEAN Secretariat to prepare for the Second EAS Environment Ministers Meeting, preferably to be held back-to-back with the 11<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment (AMME) in Singapore.

14. The Ministers expressed their appreciation to the Government of Viet Nam for making the necessary preparations and hosting the Inaugural EAS Environment Ministers Meeting.