

STATEMENT

OF THE 2012 APEC MEETING OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

(16-18 July 2012, Khabarovsk)

We, the APEC Ministers and senior officials responsible for the environment, meeting in Khabarovsk, the Russian Federation, on July 16-18, 2012, shared the conviction that environmental protection and the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, ecosystems and biodiversity are essential foundations for achieving sustainable economic and social results for the APEC region.

We welcome the participation in the meeting of the representative of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The efforts of the international communities on the global environmental issues have been helpful in highlighting the need to step up efforts to cooperate and collaborate with each other at both the regional and global levels.

However, the environmental situation has not significantly improved over the last decades; with the extinction of many plant and animal species, deforestation and forest degradation, depletion of natural resources, pollution of the oceans and the atmosphere, mainly due to expansion of human activities and unsustainable consumption and production patterns. Additionally there are new environmental challenges which need to be addressed.

We in the APEC region recognize the importance of preserving the natural ecosystems that help protect us from natural disasters and the attendant human suffering and economic loss.

We underline that further efforts are needed to conserve nature, sustainably use natural resources and protect the environment, as one of the pillars for sustainable development.

We welcome the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 20-22 June, 2012, and we resolve to act on the commitments made at Rio, in our respective economies and through our cooperation in the framework of APEC.

Recognizing the complex nature of sustainable development in the region, we emphasize the importance of an inter-disciplinary approach to addressing this task, and therefore, we express our appreciation for the environmentally-oriented work carried out by other APEC fora and ministerial meetings.

We have focused our efforts and expressed a variety of views on the following five areas:

1. Conservation of biological diversity

Serious efforts by individual economies, as well as at regional and international levels, are being made to conserve and sustainably use the biological diversity of the planet. However, we recognize the loss of biodiversity and degradation of ecosystems, which highlights the need for urgent and decisive measures to conserve biodiversity and build ecosystem resilience.

Realizing the importance of biodiversity, we express our support for the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 adopted in 2010 and achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

We resolve to strengthen protected areas systems in the APEC region, working within our own economies and, as appropriate and mutually agreed, through trans-boundary arrangements.

Studying the conditions of implementation of cross-border cooperation projects aimed at conserving endangered species is important. We encourage APEC economies to establish cross-border protected areas as well as develop programs and projects in the region aimed at better understanding and conserving biological and landscape diversity, protecting natural heritage, developing environmental awareness programs, and promoting eco-tourism.

More collaboration is suggested on cross-border programs and projects for wildlife rescue and rehabilitation, ecosystem risk management for contaminated site remediation, and networking to enhance communication on regional biodiversity matters.

We recognize the economic, social, security and environmental impacts of illicit trafficking of wildlife, where firm and strengthened action is needed to combat illegal trafficking of endangered and protected wildlife and related corruption. In this regard, we emphasize the importance of cooperative training and effective international cooperation among relevant multilateral environmental agreements and international organizations.

We recognize the efforts made by APEC members, in cooperation with international, non-governmental organizations and other groups, including academic and business circles, to elaborate domestic strategies, policies and measures for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

2. Sustainable use of natural resources

We recognize that efficient and sustainable use of natural resources is fundamental to economic growth. When they are well managed, renewable resources such as forests and fisheries – and non-renewable resource sectors such as mining – can make significant and sustainable contributions to growth and prosperity in the APEC region. Ecosystem services provided by well-functioning ecosystems – such as soil formation and retention, pollination, and the regulation of hydrological functions – are indispensable foundations for food and water security. Natural ecosystems and

biodiversity also provide the basis for an eco-tourism industry that creates jobs and improves welfare for millions of our citizens.

We welcome the Joint Statement of the 2012 APEC Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Mining, held in Saint Petersburg, the Russian Federation on 27-28 June 2012, and note its findings that the Asia-Pacific region is the biggest producer and consumer of mineral resources, that the sector is of major economic and social importance for the APEC economies, and that there is a need to adopt domestic environmental regulations which encourage resource development while at the same time protecting human health and the environment.

We recognize that circulation of resources, including by recycling, is one of the ways to implement the concept of sustainable development.

Conservation and sustainable use of forest resources are among the most important challenges of the modern world. We note that APEC economies account for more than 50% of the global forest areas, 60% of the global wood products and 80% of the global trade in forest products.

We recognize the importance of conserving rich forest resources and increasing sustainable forest management capacities in the region. We further recognize that illegal logging and associated trade have negative economic, social and environmental impacts. Therefore, we welcome the Declaration adopted by the APEC Leaders in Sydney in 2007 and the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet) with the aspiration to increase forest area in the APEC region by at least 20 million hectares by 2020.

We welcome the establishment of the Experts Group on Illegal Logging and Associated Trade (EGILAT) in 2011 and note with appreciation the two successful EGILAT meetings held in the Russian Federation during the first half of 2012.

We support the statement adopted at the First APEC Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Forestry held in Beijing in 2011.

We note the importance of sustainable management of coastal and marine ecosystems, including the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and associated trade, enshrined in the Seoul Oceans Declaration (2002), the Bali Plan of Action (2005) and the Paracas Declaration (2010). We reaffirm that APEC economies will work together to implement sustainable management of coastal and marine ecosystems.

We recognize that overexploitation of several types of marine bioresources has adverse impacts on marine ecosystems and biodiversity and eventually impacts the socio-economic status of populations in coastal regions. Therefore, we recognize the contribution of the APEC Ocean and Fisheries Working Group. In this regard, we welcome the adoption of the Kazan Declaration on APEC Food Security adopted in May 2012 which further promotes sustainable management of ecosystems, fisheries and aquaculture.

3. Sustainable water management and trans-boundary watercourses

We recognize that water is at the core of sustainable development and highlight its link to economic growth, poverty reduction, food security, a better sanitary state of the environment and ecosystems protection. Freshwater resources are increasingly stressed in many parts of the planet. In this regard, we note the importance of regional and global partnership efforts to achieving comprehensive and sustainable approaches to the management of water resources.

We note that intensive industrial and agricultural developments, expansion of human settlements, population growth, and increasing per capita consumption all have a significant impact on the hydrological cycle and water resources. We stress the importance of integrated water resource management.

We welcome the efforts made by the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) for ensuring water resources security and underline the importance of the aims of the Water security roadmap for 2012 to promote water resources security. We note the importance of cooperation in the APEC region in the field of sustainable management of water and trans-boundary watercourses.

We encourage cooperation among APEC economies to conduct research on water and water pollution management that can inform cooperative activities and management approaches.

4. Addressing trans-boundary air pollution and climate change

Since climate change impacts many aspects of human life, it is one of the most important sustainable development issues.

To reduce the adverse effects from climate change on sustainable development, we underline the need for effective policies and programs in APEC economies, including related to climate change adaptation.

We note the need for actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including through increasing energy efficiency, developing low-carbon technologies and alternative and renewable energy sources, promoting sustainable transport and urban infrastructure development and addressing deforestation and forest degradation.

We reiterate our support to work together towards the success of the UNFCCC COP 18 in Doha, based on the results achieved at COP 17, including the establishment of the Durban Platform.

We welcome specific measures to support climate science taken in individual APEC economies and stress the need for closer cooperation concerning research on weather and climate.

In addition, we underline the scientific findings on trans-boundary air pollution and note usefulness of providing such information to policy-makers.

5. Support for green growth

We recognize green growth as one of the important pathways to the achievement of sustainable development and note the important contributions of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in support of green growth.

To make the transition to green growth, it is necessary to take concrete steps to fulfill APEC Leaders' Honolulu commitments and we reaffirm those commitments to advance our shared green growth objectives.

We commit to counter the environmental challenges facing the region. We support the work being done in APEC with respect to environmental goods and services, including the efforts of APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade announced in Kazan, as well as reduction of aggregate energy intensity of our economies.

We anticipate the future role of the Global Green Growth Institute established during the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in assisting APEC economies to achieve sustainable development through green growth.

We note contributions of many APEC fora to green growth. In this regard, we support the "Action Agenda To Move APEC Toward An Energy Efficient, Sustainable, Low-Carbon Transport Future" adopted at the APEC Joint Transportation and Energy Ministerial Conference in September 2011, and we support the Energy Ministers' St. Petersburg 2012 Declaration "Energy Security: Challenges and Strategic Choices."

Finally, we deeply appreciate the tremendous efforts put in by the host economy, the Russian Federation, in organizing this Ministerial meeting.