

**Chair's Summary of the
Tenth Environment Congress for Asia and the Pacific
(ECO ASIA 2001)**

*Tokyo, Japan
October 13-14, 2001*

1. The Tenth Environment Congress for Asia and the Pacific (ECO ASIA 2001), hosted by the Ministry of the Environment of Japan, was held in Tokyo, Japan on October 13-14, 2001. The Congress was attended by 88 participants, including 13 ministers and 39 other national delegates representing 21 countries, mainly from the Asia-Pacific region. Thirty-six of the participants represented 12 international organizations and a range of other agencies.
2. The Congress was chaired by H.E. Ms. Yoriko Kawaguchi, Minister of the Environment, Japan. It took up the following topics:
 - a. Establishment of Asia-Pacific Forum for Environment and Development
 - b. Output of ECO ASIA Long-Term Perspective Project Phase II
 - c. Preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development
 - d. Climate Change
 - e. ECO ASIA's Future Activities

**Establishment of the Asia-Pacific Forum for Environment and Development
(APFED)**

3. The session on the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Forum for Environment and Development (APFED) began with a presentation by the Secretariat overviewing the preparations made for the Forum since ECO ASIA last convened.
4. The proposed APFED was recognized by the participants of ECO ASIA 2001 as having member candidates possessing an extraordinary range of knowledge, skills, and experience. In light of the high level of eminence of proposed Forum members and the Forum's conceptually innovative roots, the Congress expressed a strong desire to see innovative, concrete proposals emerging from the Forum. It also expressed its overall support for items in the draft Terms of Reference, noting, for example, their desire to see the Forum explore innovative financing options. Ministers emphasized their desire to have the Forum maintain a high degree of transparency and give full consideration to the unusual range of economic, social, and environmental realities which confront the region.
5. The Congress granted overall approval to the establishment of the Forum after consideration of its draft Terms of Reference and its proposed timetable and after clarification by the Secretariat regarding the Forum member selection process. Furthermore many ministers mentioned that the draft Terms of

Reference and the issues likely to be pursued by the Forum matched well their own visions for what topics the region should be pursuing.

Output of ECO ASIA Long-term Perspective Project (LTPP) Phase II

6. Mr. Kazuo Matsushita, Acting Vice-President of the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), introduced the draft final report on the ECO ASIA Long-term Perspective Project (LTPP) Phase II (1998-2001). Among the comprehensive contents of the report (entitled "Towards a Sustainable Asia and the Pacific: Report of ECO ASIA Long-term Perspective Project Phase II (Draft)"), he highlighted the application of the LTPP's four key concepts (eco-consciousness, eco-partnership, eco-technology/eco-investment, and eco-policy linkage) to six critical environmental issues in Asia and the Pacific region, i.e., climate change, urban environment, freshwater, forests, biodiversity, and education for sustainability.
7. The analyses and recommendations provided in the report were welcomed by the participants. Comments made by the participants pointed to a need for a renewed recognition of the importance of the four key concepts and their application to the diverse critical issues related to sustainable development in the region, as well as a need for enhancement of implementation capability in each participating country. Participants also expressed expectations regarding the follow-up activities of the LTPP, i.e. those to be undertaken via the Asia-Pacific Environmental Innovation Strategy Project (APEIS), and expressed their hopes that APEIS would address some issues not fully addressed under the LTPP, such as land degradation and waste management.
8. Participants endorsed the draft of the final report of LTPP Phase II. The chair asked the Secretariat to revise the draft to reflect the Congress' discussions and present the final version at November's Asia-Pacific regional preparatory meeting for the WSSD.

Preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development

9. The discussion on preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) began with five leadoff speeches. Mr. Nitin Desai, United Nations Under-Secretary General, spoke first, reminding the participants of the implementation-oriented focus of the WSSD and the crucial role of regional meetings in WSSD success. He urged ministers to work for the involvement of a broad variety of stakeholders, as the WSSD is not just a governmental meeting. He further urged the ministers to encourage their heads of state and fellow Cabinet members to focus clearly on the WSSD agenda, citing a need to build strong political support for the WSSD immediately. He mentioned three central issues for Asia, namely poverty eradication, sustainable consumption, and ecosystem perspectives. In the

context of the WSSD preparatory process, he emphasized the importance of political will, the need to develop practical steps for implementation, and creating and strengthening partnerships. He also emphasized the need to advance substantive consideration of these issues in the preparatory process.

10. Dr. Klaus Töpfer, United Nations Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), urged the participants to act to step up regional and global level preparations in order to emerge with substantive results, particularly with regard to what is the best administrative structure for facilitating implementation. He reminded the participants that the WSSD is about sustainable development and not only about the environment and in that context urged the participants to cooperate with economic commissions and development banks as well as UNDP and UNEP.
11. Dr. Kim Hak-Su, United Nations Under-Secretary General and Executive Secretary of Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), explained the leadership role of ESCAP in organizing subregional and regional preparatory meetings with a high degree of openness of dialog and an emphasis on concrete action, both unique to the Asia-Pacific region. He then reiterated the goals of the region's preparatory process, namely the formulation and adoption of a forward-looking regional platform, which would include actions addressing priority areas.
12. Prof. A.H. Zakri, Director of the Institute of Advanced Studies of the United Nations University (UNU/IAS), first discussed the issue of inter-linkages and then reminded the participants of the need to focus on the priority areas of better assessment techniques and effects of environmental degradation on the poor. He emphasized the need for early agreement on a realistic agenda and proposed examining increased opportunities for dialog, especially informal meetings at which exchanges of views can take place.
13. Dr. Eimi Watanabe, Assistant Administrator and Director of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) then emphasized the key nature of national engagement and follow-up as means for overall mobilization and engagement, citing UNDP country assessments as a good means of making the challenges and successes in the region prominent. The highlighting of success stories will be crucial in developing implementable ideas.
14. Discussions reconfirmed the importance of the WSSD preparatory processes currently being undertaken at national, subregional, and regional levels. Participants highlighted that the success of the summit requires the involvement of ministers and others overseeing and involved in a broad range of sectors, not merely environment ministers. The need for the involvement of heads of state, development ministers and other ministers in preparations for the summit was stressed, as was the key importance of collaboration between central governments and other stakeholders, including NGOs, businesses, and local governments. Participants further noted that implementation aspects

must be emphasized at the summit if the world is going to achieve its sustainable development goals.

15. Priority areas to take up in the WSSD preparatory process, including sub-regional meetings, were pointed out: poverty-related issues; financing issues; technology development and transfer; governance, including inter-linkages; consumption patterns; health; oceans; freshwater; mountain ecosystems; land degradation; desertification; and the cultural and religious aspects of environmental issues.

Climate Change

16. The Congress' consideration on Climate Change began with a leadoff speech by Mr. Hironori Hamanaka, Vice-Minister for Global Environment Affairs, Ministry of the Environment of Japan. Mr. Hamanaka presented his views regarding the upcoming 7th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP7). He explained that the agreement at COP6*bis* was a vital step toward the Kyoto Protocol's entry into force by 2002, and that the government of Japan will make every effort to achieve final international agreement on the Kyoto Protocol at COP7. He stressed the commitment of assistance to developing countries to address climate change issues. He concluded by presenting two challenges, specifically the effective implementation of the Kyoto Protocol and the design of the next steps to be undertaken after the conclusion of the first commitment period.
17. The floor was opened for discussion about climate change and COP7. It was noted that climate change was a real and urgent problem requiring cooperative efforts among countries. Participants also emphasized the importance of a global regime in which every country can participate under the principles stipulated in the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol.
18. Country delegates spoke of their many efforts to date, such as recently introduced policies and legislation and national communications under the UNFCCC. They spoke appreciatively of these and other strategies and projects established through the cooperation of and assistance provided by GEF, UNEP, UNDP, ADB, JICA, foreign governments, and so on. Countries also mentioned the areas of assistance they most urgently required, including areas such as research, technology transfer, and capacity building, among others.
19. Participants noted the need for strong political will at COP7. They highlighted strongly the need for Parties to reach agreement on the legal text of the detailed rules and procedures for the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol at COP7 as well as the importance of the Protocol's early entry into force.

ECO ASIA's Future Activities

20. The secretariat proposed a new range of activities and mechanisms for the further progress of ECO ASIA based on its ten years of experience to date. They were the launch of the Asia-Pacific Environmental Innovation Strategy Project (APEIS) and the establishment of an ECO ASIA Panel. The APEIS Project has been proposed with the expectations of furthering the outcomes of the LTPP for sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region and has three primary objectives: to build the scientific infrastructure for policy making; to promote environmental cooperation and capacity building; and to propose a model of a regional initiative. APEIS will be undertaken in close collaboration with the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN), and other relevant projects and agencies.
21. The participants expressed their high expectations for these new initiatives as well as important suggestions for their better implementation, including the need for research which is action-oriented, the need for information transparency, capacity building, and the value of maximizing participation by countries throughout the region, particularly as they undertake to implement Agenda 21. After a comprehensive discussion which broached the initiatives' goals, logistic considerations, and funding mechanism, the Congress endorsed with appreciation the launch of APEIS and the establishment of the ECO ASIA Panel. The chair, on behalf of the Congress, asked the secretariat of the ECO ASIA Panel to consult closely with participating countries and organizations during the selection of the members of the Panel and to review and coordinate the workings of the APEIS Project, taking into full account the suggestions and views expressed during the Congress.
22. The representative of Australia drew the Congress' attention to the operation of the caretaker administration in Australia.
23. The Congress heard the result of the Conference on Global Environmental Crisis, which the Global Environmental Action (GEA), in cooperation with UNDESA, held concurrently with ECO ASIA, from Prof. Emil Salim who chaired the Conference. The Congress also received a report from Prof. Morishima on the APFED Organizational Meeting on October 14. The Congress thanked them for their reports.
24. The participants expressed their appreciation to the Ministry of the Environment of Japan and other parties involved in organizing the meeting.