

Senior Officials Meeting on the 3R Initiative

Questionnaire on 3Rs' strategies and activities

As announced earlier, the Senior Officials Meeting on the 3R Initiative will be held from 6 March to 8 March 2006 in Tokyo, Japan. During the meeting, two working groups will be held in parallel in the afternoon of Day 1 (6 March) and Day 2 (7 March) to discuss the promotion of the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle).

The two working groups will respectively discuss: (1) promotion of the 3Rs at the *national level*, and (2) promotion of the 3Rs at the *international level* (e.g., international flow of recyclable resources and remanufactured goods). Both working groups will cover the following policy issues related to the promotion and implementation of the 3Rs: (a) cooperation between developed and developing countries, (b) cooperation among stakeholders, and (c) promotion of science and technology.

As stated in the letter from the Task Force for the 3R Initiative, we sent you this questionnaire to reflect your input on the issue paper for the meeting. Also, the result of the survey will be publicly reported later.

Please provide information relative to as many of the items as possible and send it prior to 23 January 2006 by e-mail to 3R@env.go.jp or by fax to +81-3-3593-8262.

1. 3Rs policy and strategy update

At the Ministerial Conference on the 3Rs in April 2005, participating countries reported their 3Rs policy and strategies in the form of the 3Rs portfolio. Please provide us with information on the major developments of strategies, policies and activities on the 3Rs of your organisation since the Ministerial Conference on the 3Rs (April 2005).

- The fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific (MCED5) was held in Seoul in March 2005 and adopted an approach for the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development by promoting environmentally sustainable economic growth or *Green Growth* and as an instrument for achieving the MDG 1 on Poverty Reduction and MDG 7 on Environmental Sustainability. As a follow up to the recommendations of the Ministerial Conference and based on the Resolution of the 61st Session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the secretariat initiated analytical and normative work to operationalize the Green Growth. Green Growth and 3R are intricately interlinked and mutually enforcing concepts since both focus on improving the eco-efficiency of economic development and growth pattern (consumption & production) of our society as a whole.
- MCED also reviewed comprehensively the achievements of the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment, which was adopted at the Fourth MCED in 2000 with the mandate to achieve measurable progress in improvement of the environmental quality in urban areas in Asia and the Pacific in a given timeframe, i.e. 2000 - 2005. Progresses were reported in areas of solid waste management, water pollution control and maintenance of drinking water quality and air pollution control in participating cities. Feedback from those cities indicated that they benefited from the Kitakyushu Initiatives, particularly in improvements in local environmental governance, bettering of awareness and understanding of the effective policy framework, as well as of a variety of options for policy, financial and technological instruments, and enhancement of public awareness and participation. On basis of such assessment, MCED2005 *supported* the practical and focused activities and measures that have been undertaken for the implementation of the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment and *endorsed* the Action Plan for Future Activities with a view to guiding its activities between 2005 and 2010, thus the Kitakyushu Initiative is now set for the second cycle.

2. Good practices

2.1 Good practices on 3Rs

We are going to develop a showcase of the successful activities on the 3Rs, including those of the international and national level, the municipality level, industry, and NGOs/NPOs. Please fill out the EXCEL sheet attached to this e-mail with your good practices on the 3Rs. (Note: Please provide us with detailed information on a few of the most successful cases in which your organisation is involved.)

2.2 3Rs and governance

To promote the 3Rs, it is necessary to develop a governance system that responds to different situations and conditions. Are there any specific issues relating to institutional arrangements for the implementation of the 3Rs and environmentally-sound management of waste? For example, please explain the different roles of stakeholders in the promotion of the 3Rs activities that your organisation is involved with.

- All stakeholders have important and inter-complementary roles in enhancing the eco-efficiency of production and consumption patterns in different aspects of the economic activities of our society as a whole, including the environmentally-sound management of waste and the implementation of the 3Rs.
- Among others, Government has a primary responsibility to provide the enabling policy environment in which all other stakeholders can effectively fulfill their roles. Components of such enabling policies would include adequate legislation and enforcement/compliance mechanisms, provision of market mechanisms to ensure the internalization of environmental externalities and the creation of the level playing field for raw (virgin) and recycled materials, and improve availability and applicability of environmentally sound technological options, etc. In this context, UNESCAP provides forums for policy dialogue among the member Governments focusing on the role of public sectors in improving eco-efficiency. The First Regional Policy Dialogue was held in November 2005 in Seoul, Republic of Korea focusing on application on Green Tax and Budget Reform, and the Second Regional Policy Dialogue is scheduled for May 2006 in Beijing, China with focus on role of the public sector in providing sustainable consumption policies. As a concrete mechanism to further assist the governments in the region, a Regional Help Desk on Sustainable Consumption and Production is being established and hosted by the he China Certification Centre for Energy Conservation Products in Beijing.
- UNESCAP is also working closely with local governments, within the framework of the Kitakyushu Initiative. It recognized that local governments can play a vital role in mitigating pollution and taking remedial measures to improve the environment, through exercising their authority over land use, transportation, building construction, waste management, and often over energy supply and management. Cities can also encourage voluntary actions by citizens and businesses through day-to-day communications, campaigns and information dissemination in combination with various policy tools. To facilitate such action, the Kitakyushu Initiative promotes activities at the ground-level to achieve tangible improvements in urban environmental quality, including solid waste management, facilitates transfer of successful practices through inter-city cooperation (i.e. twining cities, study tours, replication projects, etc.), and provides various assistance for strengthening local initiatives and enhancing multi-stakeholder partnerships at the local level.

- Businesses in Asia and the Pacific region certainly recognize the enormous opportunity to bring “market driven” and environmentally sustainable technology to the world’s largest number of consumers, the largest layer of the population with lowest income. For private-sector institutions with the resources and persistence to compete at the bottom of the world economic pyramid, the prospective rewards include not only growth and profits, but also incalculable contributions to humankind. Provision of environmentally sound technologies will provide an enabling environment to empower poor rural community members to open up to new opportunities for income generation that will allow them to participate in the economy and go out of the poverty trap, while also improving their quality of life by meeting their basic needs. It will improve the quality of life for all of humanity by reducing pressure on the limited carrying capacity of the earth. With this view as background, UNESCAP is taking the opportunity of its 62nd Commission Session to be held in Jakarta in April 2006 to organize the Second Asia Business Forum to initiate a constructive dialogue among members of the business community, policy makers and various stakeholders and to sensitize and promote their explicit roles in achieving socially equitable and sustainable development in the region..
- The roles of NGOS and other civil society organizations are enormous in creating public pressure for the public sector as well as private sector companies to ensure environmental sustainability of their economic activities. Their roles are also significant as consumers / investors, as they are also creating incentives to businesses to invest in supporting environmental sustainability objectives and by doing so, to create higher corporate value in the product / capital markets. However, in order to ensure effective ‘monitoring’ roles of the NGOs, as well as to promote environmentally sound consumer/investor choices, availability and public accessibility to most relevant and precise information, e.g. on environmental performances of companies, are critically important. With this view, UNESCAP is initiating the Asia-Pacific regional process to pragmatically address the requirements of promotion of *access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters* that are promulgated in the European “Aarhus” Convention. In cooperation with key partners such as the Thailand Environment Institute, World Resources Institute and Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, the first regional forum for addressing critical principles, including Principle 10 of Rio Declaration, is planned in late April in Bangkok.

2.3 3Rs and environmentally-sound management of industrial waste

Since economic development tends to cause an increase in the amount of industrial waste generation, environmentally-sound management of industrial waste is essential to promote the 3Rs. To decouple economic development and industrial waste generation, what kind of role is expected for the industrial waste emitter, national and local governments, including municipalities? Also, please give us your views on how to share the responsibilities of construction and operation of landfill as final disposal sites among the stakeholders?

- Decoupling economic development and adverse environmental impacts is also a key concept addressed by Green Growth. Our views on the roles of different stakeholders as

well as our approaches and activities to strengthen their roles are described in 2.2

3. International 3R policy and strategy

At the Ministerial Conference on the 3R Initiative, it was observed that the international flow of (i) goods and materials for recycling and manufacturing, and (ii) recycled and remanufactured products (hereinafter “recyclable resources and remanufactured goods”) may contribute to the efficient use of resources and the prevention of environmental pollution if proper mechanisms are in place. It may promote sustainable consumption and production affecting not only the environment but also economic development and job creation. At the same time, it was noted that for many countries the first priority should be placed on minimising the wastes within the country in which the wastes are generated. Participants at the Ministerial Conference expressed the view that the transboundary movement of wastes should only take place when safe and appropriate use and environmentally-sound management are possible in the receiving country.

3.1 Situation of transboundary movement of recyclable resources and remanufactured goods

Regarding the transboundary movement of recyclable resources and remanufactured goods, have you observed any specific problems associated with certain types of recyclable resources and remanufactured goods? What are the major reasons for the problems?

- As UNESCAP has been mandated to undertake regular studies and analyses of regional environmental trends, a number of cases have been reported by member countries, NGOs, academics and others, based on which ‘trade in hazardous waste’ and ‘informal recycling of e-waste’ were among identified as major threats in the region in the report submitted to MCED5.
- Reasons for environmental problems associated with transboundary movement of recyclable materials should include 1) insufficient institutional capacity to guarantee environmental sound management, in particular, in the recipient countries, and 2) no incentives or penalties to motivate the business entities all along the waste stream (waste generation to final disposal) to ensure environmentally sound management of their wastes.

3.2 Environmentally-sound management in transboundary movement of recyclable resources and remanufactured goods

To prevent environmental pollution caused by transboundary movement of recyclable resources, what kind of policies and measures (e.g., cooperation among international organizations, national governments and other stakeholders) are expected? If your organisation has already launched such activities, please provide us with detailed information.

- Appropriate market mechanism that internalize environmental and social externalities into the material price. As mentioned earlier, the First Regional Policy Dialogue on Green Growth held in November 2005 in Seoul, Republic of Korea highlighted the

significance and further potentials of eco-tax as a mechanism to internalize environmental and social externalities.

- Capacity building is definitely an essential component to ensure environmentally sound management of recyclable material in the recipient - developing countries. As UNESCAP organizes capacity building courses and events on broad sustainable development subjects in response to requests from member states, "Subregional Seminar on Management of Hazardous Wastes and their Transboundary Movements" was held in Omsk, Russian Federation, in June 2000 in cooperation with the Secretariat of the Basel Convention. The target of the seminar was the custom officers from the Siberian and Far-eastern parts of the Russian Federation, in addition to the national environmental administration officers from four neighboring countries, i.e. as Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

3.3 Harmonisation of economic and environmental benefits through the transboundary movements of recyclable resources and remanufactured goods

Please provide information on positive and negative socio-economic impacts of the increase in import and export of recyclable resources and remanufactured goods your organisation observed. What kinds of policies and measures have been implemented to support the positive effects and mitigate negative effects of trade of recyclable resources and remanufactured goods?

- Positive side impacts essentially include the establishment of more resource efficient society, which by reducing pressures of economic growth on the earth's natural resource base, enhances both environmental and economic sustainability of the economic development and growth.
- Also emphasized should be the new business opportunity associated with further enhancement of inter and intra-regional trades. The expected transfer of recycling base to developing countries should also contribute to the further acceleration of the foreign direct investment (FDI) as well as technology transfer into such countries.
- Negative side impacts dominantly include the problems of social equity between those who enjoys economic benefits from transboundary recycling and those who simply suffer from environmental externalities of such activities. Inequity apparently exists between exporting countries and importing countries, as well as between businesses and other populations in developing countries, which are often recognized as unequal share of fruit of globalization.
- UNESCAP advocates, through various activities on Green Growth described earlier, that the current pattern of economic growth presents challenges to enhanced sustainable development, and poses major threats to environmental sustainability in Asia and the Pacific region: The region would not be able to economic growth without improving the ecological efficiency and social equity of its development patterns.

4. Others

If there are any other issues related to the promotion of the 3Rs which should be discussed in the Senior Officials Meeting, please provide us with your input below.

5. Information of respondent

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