

LIMITED

ENR/PM/MCED/7  
16 June 1995

ENGLISH ONLY

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

**Preparatory Meeting for the Ministerial Conference on Environment  
and Development in Asia and the Pacific  
1-4 August 1995  
Bangkok**

**DRAFT MINISTERIAL DECLARATION ON ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND  
AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC\***

(Item 4 (g) of the provisional agenda)

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**DRAFT MINISTERIAL DECLARATION ON ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND AND  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC  
NOVEMBER 1995**

1. We, the Ministers of Asia and the Pacific, representing more than half of the global population, met at ..... from..... to ..... November 1995 at the Third Ministerial-level Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific;

2. Renewing our Commitment to Rio de Janeiro Declaration on Environment and Development and the provisions of Agenda 21; as well as the Ministerial Declarations on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific of 1985 and 1990;

3. Subscribing in particular to the elements of the Rio principles namely that States have the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental and developmental policies and the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other states; that the right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations; that States should widely apply precautionary principles according to their capabilities; that States should cooperate in eradicating poverty as an indispensable requirement for sustainable development; that States should reduce and eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and promote appropriate demographic policies; that States should cooperate to promote a supportive and open international economic system, that would lead to economic growth and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific; and that States should immediately notify other States of any environmental disasters likely to affect the environment of these States;

4. Noting that the 1995 Report on the State of the Environment in Asia and the Pacific has highlighted that there is a serious threat

to environmentally sound and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific due to environmental degradation and depletion of natural resources, such as reduction of forest cover, desertification, loss of biodiversity, soil erosion, depletion of fresh water resources, degradation of coastal and marine resources, including mangroves, coral reefs and fish stocks, air and water pollution, ozone layer depletion, climate change and potential rise in sea level, among others;

5. Recognizing that the pressure of population in Asian and the Pacific is the highest in the world with 55 per cent of the world's population living on 23 per cent of the world's total land area; that there is abject poverty with one-third of the people of the region living below the poverty line; that the diverse ecosystems of the region are not only fragile but highly vulnerable; that the high economic growth rates achieved in the last decade in certain parts of the region have had some adverse impacts on the environment; that under development and unsustainable development have contributed to environmental degradation; that the urban population in the Asian and Pacific region which was only 30 per cent of the total world population in 1990 is currently projected to increase to 50 per cent by 2020; overloading urban infrastructures and exacerbating the problems of pollution, shelter, nutrition, health and sanitation;

6. Acknowledging that many of the developing countries of the region lack adequate finances, necessary technologies and the required human resource capability to fully develop and effectively implement environmental protection and management programmes; that there is an urgent need for transfer of technology on favourable terms including preferential and concessional terms to the developing countries of the region, in particular to the LDCs; that there is a need to enhance endogenous capacity building to assess, adopt, manage and apply environmentally sound technologies;

7. Noting with concern the inadequacy of financial resources for

implementing programmes and projects for environmentally sound and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific and that the flow of Official Development Assistance (ODA) into the region continues to be far below the level expected at the Earth Summit; that the Global Environment Facility (GEF) replenishment, which is a welcome move, is both inadequate and restricted to selected areas of global environmental concern;

8. Welcoming the positive steps taken by members and associate members of ESCAP, UN bodies, Development Banks and other Intergovernmental Organizations in the field of environmental legislation and institutions, public awareness, education, research and training, disaster management, hazardous waste management, combating deforestation and desertification, rehabilitation of marine environment, improving air and water quality, and promoting sustainable policies on poverty, population and health;

9. Reiterating the will and the determination of the people and the governments of the Asian and Pacific region to individually and collectively muster all the resources of the region and embark on a concerted effort to achieve ESSD in the shortest possible time;

10. Commit to the judicious application of policies on population management, protection of human health, poverty alleviation, environmental management and the rational harnessing of resources as essential prerequisites for ESSD at national level; take steps to integrate environmental protection and management into the development process as a means of achieving ESSD; promote greater regional and subregional cooperation in all spheres of environment and development; obtain optimum participation of the people, particularly women, youth and children and of peoples organizations, nongovernmental organizations and the private sector in the protection and management of the environment in the region;

11. Emphasize that trade and environment policies should be mutually supportive and in favour of sustainable development and

stress that environment related regulations or standards, including those related to health and safety standards, should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on trade;

12. Resolve to implement Agenda 21, the Regional Strategy on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Framework of Regional Action for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific as the basic framework of policies and strategies on ESSD in Asia and the Pacific; and actively promote and facilitate the formulation and implementation of National Strategies, National Environmental Action Plans, National Conservation Strategies and Environmental Management Plans for the implementation of Agenda 21;

13. Endorse the regional action programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific as a rational and viable instrument for achieving the common goal of ESSD in Asia and the Pacific; and decide to take steps to implement it and to strengthen institutional framework and promote capacity-building at the regional, subregional and national levels for the purpose;

14. Request members and associate members of ESCAP and all the relevant UN bodies, development banks and other intergovernmental organizations to provide adequate financial resources and actively promote the transfer of technologies including state of the art technologies for implementation of the Regional Action Programme and National Action Plans;

15. Urge developed countries to provide substantial new and additional financial resources, in line with the commitment made at the Earth Summit to reach the UN target of 0.7 per cent of GNP for Official Development Assistance (ODA), to the extent that they have not yet achieved this target, for activities concerning sustainable development and implementation of Agenda 21 by developing countries

and in particular for the Regional Action Programme and support early replenishment of concessional funds in the multinational financial institutions such as the International Development Assistance (IDA) and the Asian Development Fund (ADF).

[16. Decide to establish a regional trust fund, as the funding mechanism for ESSD in Asia and the Pacific;]

17. Agree to convene the Fourth Ministerial-level Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific in the year 2000 or earlier, if necessary.

18. Decide to review periodically the progress made in the implementation of this Declaration and the Regional Action Programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development, and in this context, request the Executive Secretary of ESCAP to submit to the Commission annual progress reports for its consideration.