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in Asia and the Pacific

15-16 October 1990
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REPORT OF THE PREPARATORY MEETING OF SENIOR OFFICIALS

(Item 5 of the provisional agenda)

This paper has been issued without formal editing.

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

1. The Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials at the Ministerial-level Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific was held at the Central Plaza Hotel in Bangkok From 10 to 13 October 1990.

A. Attendance

2. The Meeting was attended by representatives of the following member and associate members of ESCAP: Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, France, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga, Tuvalu, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom, United States of America, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Hong Kong, Kiribati, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Republic of Palau.

3. Representatives of the following countries attended the Meeting as observers: Canada, Chile, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Finland, Israel, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey.

4. The following United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations were represented: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Asian Development Bank (ADB), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), International Labour Organisation (ILO), Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), United Nations Industrial Development

Organization (UNIDO), South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee (AALCC), Committee for Co-ordination of Joint Prospecting for Mineral Resources in Asian Offshore Areas (CCOP), European Economic Community (EEC), South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

5. The following organization was also represented: the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation.

B. Opening statements

6. Mr. S.A.M.S. Kibria, Executive Secretary, welcomed the participants and stated that the preparatory meeting was to review the documents and make recommendations for consideration of the Ministers. The Meeting was informed that in line with the International Decade for Natural Disasters Resolution, the opening day coincided with the UN International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction. This should be borne in mind during the course of the Meeting especially in view of the fact that the natural disasters in the Asian and Pacific region, especially typhoons, floods and earthquakes, contributed to the loss of more than 1.2 million lives between 1964 and 1986 and made a billion people homeless with property losses estimated at 18 billion dollars.

7. The Executive Secretary drew the attention of the Meeting to the fact that the documents presented at this meeting, with the exception of the paper on the regional input to the UNCED 1992, had been considered by the Expert Group Meeting on the Report of the State of the Environment in Asia and the Pacific held in Bangkok in May 1990 and the Expert Group Meeting in Jomtien in June 1990. Furthermore, he pointed out that the focus of the Meeting will be the draft regional strategy on environmentally sound and sustainable development, which would serve as a framework in the development of regional, subregional and national action programmes for promotion of ESSD. The recommendations outlined in the strategy include seven priority areas and 35 projects and activities to be undertaken over a

decade (1990-2000) with an estimated cost of \$US 5 million per year. Additionally, to fill the need for increased regional co-operation through policy formulation and planning at the highest level, the Executive Secretary suggested that regional ministerial-level conferences be convened regularly at least once every five years. In this regard, the Meeting was informed that the structure of ESCAP's legislative committees is now under review by a group of eminent persons and that the Commission would review the overall conference structure at the forty-seventh session in Seoul next year.

8. For increased co-operation and co-ordination, it was suggested that an Inter-Agency Committee on Environment and Development (ICED) be constituted. Furthermore, a regional network of centres of excellence on research, training, policy research and analysis on environment and development issues was proposed. Consideration should also be given to the establishment of regional specialized disaster mitigation centres and a regional working group on oceanography and marine environment.

9. The Meeting was also expected to consider a draft ministerial declaration which was outlined by an open-ended informal working group during the ESCAP/UNDP Expert Group Meeting held in Jomtien, Thailand in June 1990.

10. The Executive Secretary expressed his appreciation to the Governments of Australia, France, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Thailand and the USSR, for their financial and technical support; the financial support, co-sponsorship and co-operation of the United Nations Development Programme, Asian Development Bank, and the United Nations Environment Programme in convening the Conference were also appreciated.

11. Mr. M. Gucovsky, Deputy Director, Bureau for Programme Policy and Evaluation, UNDP, in his statement, informed the Meeting of the formation of a network of 24 UNDP field offices in Asia and the Pacific in response to requests from Governments, in support of sustainable development and the eradication of

poverty. Together with UNEP and the World Bank, UNDP will undertake programmes in four areas of priority financed through the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to be established in 1991 and the interim multilateral fund for the protection of the ozone layer. The four priority areas include protection of the ozone layers; climate change and global warming and the need for reduction of carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions; protection of biodiversity; and clean-up and protection against degradation of international waters.

12. UNDP's activities in the preparatory process towards the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be convened in Brazil in 1992 was also outlined by Mr. Gucovsky. He stated that UNDP was prepared to support individual countries in the preparation of their reports reflecting action-oriented and pragmatic plans to pursue sustainable development especially through addressing the environmental issues contained in General Assembly resolution 44/228. In this regard, the Meeting was informed that a senior UNDP staff member had been seconded to the UNCED Secretariat to co-ordinate preparations of national reports and regional input. Additionally, UNDP Resident Representatives have also been designated by the Secretary General of the UNCED as his representatives in the countries to which they are accredited.

13. Outlining the preparatory activities of UNDP for the 1992 UNCED Conference, Mr. Gucovsky touched on the 'cross-cutting' issues of importance in developing countries including development of managerial and institutional capability, especially through support of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), NGO coalitions, women organizations in addressing urban environmental problems; mobilization of environmentally benign technology; financing environmental aspects of development to assist countries in meeting the costs incurred in alleviating global and local environmental problems; and through regional and international institutional arrangements for assessing global environmental issues. These cross-cutting issues would serve as the focus for UNDP in collaborating with Governments in

formulating the fifth cycle country programme and the establishment of the Sustainable Development Network.

C. Inaugural address

14. The inaugural address was delivered by H.E. Mr. Prachuab Chaityasan, Minister of Science, Technology and Energy, who extended a warm welcome to the senior officials and expressed confidence that the Meeting will generate important ideas and recommendations towards improving the integration of environment policies with development objectives. The Minister emphasized that the deliberations were timely and that the Thai Government welcomed the opportunity to host and participate in the conference activities. He recalled that environmental preservation and its relationship to development became a priority only recently in Thailand and that this is now being translated into government policies and actions.

15. He informed the Meeting that the Thai Government currently takes environmental considerations into account in its development planning and promotes development projects which are environmentally sound, such as upper watershed reforestation and erosion control and control of discharges of liquid, solid and gases wastes into the environment.

D. Election of officers

16. Dr. Sanga Sabhasri (Thailand) was elected Chairman of the Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials; Mr. Pervez Ahmad Butt (Pakistan); and Mr. Abu Bakar Jaafar (Malaysia) were elected Vice-Chairmen; and Mr. Barney Rongap (Papua New Guinea) was elected Rapporteur.

E. Adoption of the agenda

17. The Meeting adopted the following agenda, as contained in document IHE/PMSO/L.1:

1. Opening of the Meeting.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Review of the state of the environment in Asia and the Pacific.
5. Review of the status of implementation of the recommendations of the World Commission on Environment and Development and identification of further measures to be taken in respect of the Asian and Pacific region.
6. Global environmental problems of the depletion of the ozone layer, climatic change and the rise in sea level: their implications in the context of the Asian and Pacific region.
7. Regional co-operation in the field of environment and development:
 - (a) Role of Governments, non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations bodies and agencies;
 - (b) Feasibility of establishment of a regional environment centre for Asia and the Pacific;
 - (c) Warning system against disasters and coastal area resource development and management.
8. Regional strategy on environmentally sound and sustainable development.
9. Regional input to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development 1992.
10. Other matters.
11. Adoption of the report.

18. The Meeting considered the order in which agenda items were to be considered and in light of the relative importance of agenda items 8 and 9, it was agreed to advance their consideration to follow item 4.

19. The Meeting agreed to form an informal working group on the draft ministerial declaration. Mr. Pervez Ahmad Butt, one of the Vice-Chairmen, was requested to chair the meeting of the informal working group.

II. REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

(Item 4 of the agenda)

20. The Meeting had before it documents IHE/PMSO/1 "Executive Summary", and IHE/PMSO/1/Corr.1, and the just printed first edition of the State of the Environment in Asia and the Pacific 1990.

21. In his introductory statement, the Chief of the Division of Industry, Human Settlements and Environment, ESCAP, who was designated the Secretary of the Conference stated that in 1987, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) directed the secretariat to prepare the second report on the state of the environment for the purpose of establishing a better conceptual link between economic development and environmental quality.

22. The first part of the report describes the prevailing environmental conditions in the region from the perspectives of natural and human ecosystems. The second part presents the national and regional responses to the problems, while the third and final part describes the context within which environmental policy decisions have to be made. The state of the regional environment may be summarized succinctly as follows: the biophysical conditions have, with few exceptions, deteriorated but the socio-political setting has become more receptive to new and bold initiatives. The report identifies three critical environmental problems, namely, land degradation and depletion of natural resources, unsustainable environment in rural and urban settlements, and the pollution of air and water. Paradoxically, the region's environmental problems are caused simultaneously by both rapid economic development and lack of development. While the report cannot claim to cover all the detailed aspects of the

environment, in a region characterized by diversity, dynamism and change, it presents a sufficiently clear picture of the emerging mosaic of national and regional environmental conditions.

23. The Meeting commended the secretariat for preparing a comprehensive report and noted that indeed the great diversity of the region made the effort difficult. The Meeting recognized that the report would serve as a reference material and a basic document in reviewing the environmental situation in the region which will be useful in promoting environmental awareness. The Meeting noted that the secretariat will update the report every five years.

24. A few delegations noted that some data and information quoted in the report do not conform with those from the government sources while some others need updating. The Chairman requested that such data and information, as well as, other corrections, be provided in writing to the secretariat which will take these in revising the Executive Summary and in the subsequent editions of the State of the Environment Report.

25. Several delegations suggested expanding the coverage of a number of issues, namely, unsustainable pattern of marine fishing, nuclear testing and dumping of toxic and hazardous wastes in the Pacific, natural disasters, and the subregional perspectives. One delegation underlined that the risk of increasing the rate of radioactivity linked to nuclear testing is a serious one. It was also suggested that the Asian part of the Soviet Union should be covered, that there is need to more fully integrate economic and environmental considerations and to include an assessment of environmental issues in the preparation of subsequent state of the environment reports.

26. It was suggested that, in future, representatives from as many member countries as possible should take active part in the preparation of the State of the Environment Report. It was proposed that constitution of a drafting committee composed of representatives from member countries be considered to collaborate with the secretariat in this endeavour. The co-

operation and support of subregional organizations should also be sought for this purpose. While welcoming the idea, the Meeting noted that for the preparation and issuance of the report, ESCAP bears the primary responsibility.

III. REVIEW OF THE STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT AND IDENTIFICATION OF FURTHER MEASURES TO BE TAKEN IN RESPECT OF THE ASIAN AND PACIFIC REGION

(Item 5 of the agenda)

27. The Meeting had before it document IHE/PMSO/2.

28. In his introductory statement, the Secretary of the Conference mentioned that the document evaluates the progress achieved in the Asian and Pacific region in raising public concern on environment and development issues, as follow-up to the findings and recommendations of the World Commission on Environment and Development.

29. The secretariat document begins with a brief overview of the economic development of the region and its response to the WCED report and also makes it clear that much needs to be done to achieve environmentally sound and sustainable development in the region.

30. Several recommendations at national and regional level are included in the document. The national level recommendations focus on institution building and public awareness raising activities. The recommendations at the regional level are addressed at poverty alleviation, conservation and protection of coastal areas, pollution control, and promotion of environmentally sound and sustainable development.

31. The Meeting generally endorsed the recommendations at the national level contained in the document, namely: strengthening national environment agencies and placing them at the same level as economic planning agencies; implementing environmental impact assessment (EIA) for all development projects; removing the weaknesses in environmental legislations; monitoring

environmental parameters to relate with economic indicators; enhancing training and skills development; initiating the process of natural resource accounting; increasing public awareness and promoting grass-root level action; and preparing action plans for ESSD.

32. The Meeting also generally endorsed the thrust of the recommendations at the regional level, namely: to formulate actions to alleviate poverty-related environmental degradation and identify means to rehabilitate natural resources; developing management plans for coastal areas; demonstrating the implementation of the polluters-pay-principle; and implementing a regional project to promote ESSD at the grass-roots level. However, some delegations expressed reservations regarding the proposed establishment of a high-level task force of eminent persons, calling for further elaboration of the proposals before any decision is taken.

33. In addition to strengthening the environment agencies, the Meeting agreed that the establishment of environment sections in other relevant government agencies should be encouraged in order to promote the integration of environment and development objectives.

34. Some delegations pointed out certain inaccuracies in the document and provided additional information in respect of their countries and organizations relating to the implementation of WCED recommendations. The Chairman requested that these corrections and information be transmitted in writing to the secretariat for appropriate action.

IV. GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS OF THE DEPLETION OF THE OZONE LAYER, CLIMATIC CHANGE AND THE RISE IN SEA LEVEL: THEIR IMPLICATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ASIAN AND PACIFIC REGION

(Item 6 of the agenda)

35. The Meeting had before it documents IHE/PMSO/3 and IHE/PMSO/3/Corr.1.

36. The Secretary of the Conference introduced the document which suggests that in the medium-term, climate change may aggravate the existing environmental problems in the region. In the long-term, global warming and ozone layer depletion could have serious implications on agriculture, marine environment and human health, among others. The document discusses possible preventive and adaptive measures available to governments in the region and contains a set of recommendations for action at national, regional and international levels.

37. Many delegations spoke on the issues of climate change and ozone layer depletion, reiterating the seriousness and urgency of the matter for the Asian and Pacific region, especially in view of the latest results as reflected in the first assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) which has declared imminent climate change a reality (which are not accurately reflected in the secretariat document). A recent sketch of the scale of damage to the ozone layer was provided by the representative of WMO, who informed the meeting that measurements of total ozone in the Antarctic region in September-October 1990, a peak period, indicated a 40 per cent reduction compared to the yearly average.

38. Some delegations drew the attention of the Meeting to the implications of climate change on land ecosystems. Several delegations expressed their serious concern on the impacts of sea-level rise on island nations and countries with significant coastlines. It was pointed out that climate change-induced sea level rise may be aggravated by land subsidence in a number of coastal areas in the region. In this respect, the Meeting welcomed the initiative of the Netherlands, in co-operation with Australia, USA and New Zealand, to examine the possibility to establish an international study and training centre to develop and disseminate know-how to limit the negative effects of a rise in sea level.

39. Many delegations expressed their concern that the implications of climate change may greatly exceed the financial and technical capabilities of many developing countries,

especially island countries. The changes are expected to indiscriminately affect countries in different stages of development, and urgent additional support to developing countries from industrialized countries will be therefore justified. The Meeting noted with appreciation the Netherlands' willingness to supplement the contributions of developing countries to global efforts to cope with global environmental problems, including climatic change. In general, it was stressed that greenhouse- and ozone-friendly technology should be made available to developing countries on favourable terms.

40. The Meeting generally supported the thrust of the recommendations at national, regional and international levels contained in the document and recommended the active participation of all ESCAP member countries in the IPCC process as well as in the negotiation of a framework convention on climate change. It was stressed that recommended actions need to accurately address national concerns.

41. Several delegations stressed the importance of protecting the marine environment, in particular the coral reef ecosystems and the polar regions, transfer of information aimed at disseminating the results of the IPCC and at the protection of the ozone layer and noted that subregional organizations could carry out some of the activities proposed at the regional level. At the international level, activities aimed at putting an end to "greenhouse-unfriendly practice" (i.e., those which contribute to the intensification of the greenhouse effect) should provide acceptable and viable alternatives.

42. The Meeting took note of the proposal of WMO to establish National Climate Change Co-ordination Committees, which could carry out country studies into the predicted implications of climate change, and help facilitate the international negotiation process in the coming years.

V. REGIONAL CO-OPERATION ON THE FIELD OF
ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

(Item 7 of the agenda)

43. The Meeting had before it documents IHE/PMSO/4 and IHE/PMSO/4/Corr.1.

44. In his introductory statement, the Secretary of the Conference stated that a noticeable and substantial gap in regional achievements is the lack of co-ordinated efforts for environmental protection and long-term sustainable development. Therefore an institutional mechanism is proposed to promote co-operation between Governments, NGOs and regional organizations to get the maximum benefits towards the achievements of ESSD. The document highlights the issues and mechanisms for regional co-operation in the field of environment and development in three main action proposals, namely: intergovernmental co-operation; co-ordination among the United Nations bodies and agencies, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations; and networking of institutions and training centres on environment and development; on warning systems against disasters; and coastal area resource development and management.

45. The three institutional mechanisms recommended in the secretariat document are: ministerial meetings every five years to monitor the progress in the field of environment and development; an Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials on Environment and Development (ICOSOED), meeting every two years, replacing the current ESCAP Legislative Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment; and an Inter-agency Committee on Environment and Development (ICED) to bring together all the United Nations bodies and agencies, multilateral funding agencies and non-governmental organizations active in the field. The ICED would co-ordinate activities to avoid any possible duplication and to ensure cost-effectiveness of projects and programmes currently being implemented at the regional level.

46. On the feasibility of a Regional Centre on Environment, it was stated in the document that the idea of establishing networks of national and regional technical and policy research institutes on environment and development was found to be an option supported by a majority of member governments.

47. Concerning the issue of an early warning system against disasters, a number of measures on operational mitigation programmes such as establishment of disaster mitigation centres, research and technical support, training, funding and general support were recommended. The document further recommends that regional co-operation and national capabilities to conduct monitoring and research of coastal environments could be enhanced by the establishment of a regional working group of institutes dealing with oceanography and the marine environment.

48. The Meeting noted the proposal that a ministerial-level conference on environment and development should be convened at least once every five years. However, some delegations felt that such an interval might be too long, particularly given the importance of regional action in response to anticipated follow-up recommendations of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development.

49. The Meeting discussed the proposals for the establishment of regional networks as suggested in the document, namely:

(a) A network of three types of institutions, namely, existing regional centres, national technical research and training institutions, and national policy research institutes on environment and development; UNDP's readiness to provide technical and financial support for the establishment of the Sustainable Development Network will facilitate this task.

(b) Regional specialized disaster mitigation centres, one each for South Asia, South-East Asia, East Asia, and the Pacific, in line with the World Weather Watch regional specialized meteorological centres; and

(c) A regional working group of institutes dealing with oceanography and marine environment for joint research/training programmes, and preparation of guidelines for the development of coastal environmental management plans.

The Meeting agreed that the ESCAP should play an important role to promote the formulation and strengthening of regional networks of relevant institutes and centres.

50. The Meeting recommended that a regional study on scientific and technological development aimed at strengthening national efforts in the development and transfer of technologies including environmentally sound ones be undertaken by ESCAP. It also recommended to consider the feasibility of setting up a regional bank of modern technologies including clean ones, as well as a regional training centre on technology transfer to be possibly attached to the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology. In this regard, the Meeting welcomed the offer of the delegation of USSR to contribute to the study and participate in the activities of the above regional bodies. One delegation also recommended that clean technologies should be singled out to a special group of commodities in international trade enjoying special privileges. This would facilitate decrease of their cost and could become real assistance in the solution of ecological problems in the region. The Meeting also recommended a system of ecological assistance, an international centre on early detection and warning on approaching cyclones, as well as to work out a multilateral convention on the protection of sea and biological resources of the Pacific.

51. The Meeting took note of projects, on-going as well as under consideration, to establish centres of environment in the region. In this connection, the initiative to establish a UNEP Centre in Japan for the purpose of transfer of environmentally sound technologies was introduced by Japan and was welcomed.

52. Extensive discussion took place on the proposed Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials on Environment and Development. While several delegations supported the idea in

principle, others considered that further clarification would be necessary. The Meeting was informed of the existence of intergovernmental committees of senior officials on environment in the Economic Commission for Europe. The secretariat further clarified that the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials on Environment and Development was proposed to provide the necessary intergovernmental guidance to the secretariat in place of the existing Committee on Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment of ESCAP. As this matter is currently under consideration by a group of eminent persons constituted by the Commission, the Meeting noted the need to await the result of the on-going review which will be submitted to the Commission.

53. The Meeting extensively discussed the establishment of an Inter-agency Committee on Environment and Development (ICED) and generally recognized the need for co-ordination efforts in order to utilize scarce resources more efficiently. However, some delegations felt that such co-ordination mechanism is more effective at the subregional level. The Meeting noted that at the global level, such co-ordination exists through the Designated Officials on Environmental Matters (DOEM) of UNEP, but no such arrangement exists at the regional level.

VI. REGIONAL STRATEGY ON ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

(Item 8 of the agenda)

54. The Meeting had before it documents IHE/PMSO/5 and IHE/PMSO/5/Add.1.

55. In his introductory statement, the Secretary of the Conference stated that the strategy seeks to ensure economic development in the ESCAP region with equitable distribution of the benefits of development, rational management of the region's resource base, preservation of the region's biodiversity and protection of the environment.

56. The strategy identifies factors such as efficiency, equity, resource husbandry, people's participation, self-reliance and

technology as the key elements to sustainable development; advocates short-term curative measures for tackling the most severe environmental problems of the region; suggests medium-term measures oriented towards the eradication of root causes of environmental degradation; and offers recommendations for solving global environmental problems.

57. The strategy recognizes that the primary responsibility for identification, formulation and implementation of the bulk of initiatives necessary for achieving ESSD should lie at the national level. However, a number of initiatives have been identified at the regional level in the annex to the document to support and facilitate national action plans up to the year 2000. A review and evaluation process has also been included as an integral part of the strategy implementation at both national and regional levels.

58. The Meeting recognized that due to the great diversity of the countries/areas in the region, national priorities differ. However, there are common issues, e.g. climatic change, biodiversity, technology transfer, and others, which can be identified, and groups of countries share similar environmental problems and common concerns.

59. The Meeting considered the document entitled "Regional Strategy on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development" as a substantial presentation on the concept and broad framework for promoting environmentally sound and sustainable development. While endorsing the concept and main thrust of the strategy, the Meeting considered that there is a need for further elaboration and fine tuning, taking into account, inter alia, the following: (a) special conditions and needs prevailing in the various groups of countries such as the least developed and island developing countries, newly industrializing economies and developed countries in such a diverse region, (b) need for additional funding and implementation mechanisms at the regional level to support national efforts, (c) need for promoting public awareness and interest on sustainable development issues, (d) need for carefully examining the large number of recommendations put

forward in the document, (e) need for assigning priorities to the environmental issues and developmental driving forces, and (f) need for delivery mechanisms at the national, regional, and international levels.

60. The Meeting, therefore, expressed the view that there is need to further look at the strategy document in greater detail before could be finalized. While the concept of a regional strategy is acceptable, some delegations felt that the document is still too general; others felt that it may be too specific and does not reflect the concern of some countries or group of countries; that there is need to more closely relate it to the UNCED objectives; that focus should be on common resources, environmental technology and technology transfer; that the sub-national level, for instance, the river basin, might be relevant for more rational rural planning; that the role of local authorities be strengthened; that cultural basis appropriate for each country be taken into account; that the proposed action projects need further review and should include pilot, demonstration projects; and that unsustainable harvesting of marine resources should be specifically addressed.

61. With respect of funding, several delegations felt that the suggested funding level of \$US 5 million per year is much too small for implementation of the comprehensive plan presented in the annex to the document. It was further suggested by some delegations that some of the funds could be channelled through the sub-regional organizations; that funding support could also include contributions in national currency, as well as facilities; and that effective use of existing mechanisms should be explored.

62. As regards programme implementation, some delegations proposed that several projects could be implemented through the existing sub-regional environmental programmes, and that ESCAP should play an expanded role toward strengthening the capabilities of the programmes.

63. The Meeting also agreed that further measures will be needed to assist the developing countries in the region to prepare national action plans for promoting ESSD; assist in setting project priorities; promote human resources development, institution building, and administrative and legal reforms for ESSD; and, in general, to implement the regional strategy for environmentally sound and sustainable development.

64. The Meeting, therefore, recommended the convening of a meeting of government-nominated experts early next year to finalize the detailed regional strategy in Asia and the Pacific region. The Meeting welcomed the offer of Japan to provide financial support to the ESCAP secretariat for the convening of this meeting early in 1991.

65. The Co-Chairperson of the NGO/Media Symposium, which is being held concurrently, delivered a statement at the Meeting on behalf of the Symposium. She stated that the symposium views public participation as indispensable for achieving environmentally sound and sustainable development. It urges that environmental education be incorporated in the curriculum at all levels of schooling and international organizations make available resources for this purpose; asks for more consultation and people's participation regarding major development projects, particularly at the planning stage; and encourages each country to establish a citizens code of conduct for the environment which stresses people stewardship of the environment. An invitation was extended to the Chairman to address the symposium.

VII. REGIONAL INPUT TO THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT 1992

(Item 9 of the agenda)

66. The Meeting had before it document IHE/PMSO/6.

67. In his introductory statement, the Secretary of the Conference mentioned that the present Ministerial Conference can undoubtedly make a substantive contribution to the 1992 Conference, but that is anticipated that more work will have to

be undertaken for the preparation of additional ESCAP regional input. A realistic time frame of activities was presented, with a planned ESCAP regional conference late April/early May 1991, in order to have the additional input available in time for the third session of the UNCED preparatory session in August 1991.

68. With respect to the substance of the ESCAP regional input, the Secretary asked for guidance from the Meeting on what regional issues on Environment and Development will remain between the global environmental issues and the issues that will be highlighted in the national reports to be prepared for the 1992 Conference. Special attention was drawn to the need for prioritizing the fields of interaction between the nine environmental issues as mentioned in resolution 44/228 and at least seven developmental driving forces such as population; energy and transport; industrialization; urbanization; agriculture; tourism; international trade and investment. In order to narrow down on primary goals, all member states have been asked to fill in the priority scoring tables as included in document IHE/PMSO/6 - which also touch on the so-called cross-sectoral issues such as financial resources; technology transfer; legal aspects; institutions; economic instruments; and supporting measures.

69. The Meeting was requested to comment on the outline for the regional input to the 1992 Conference as proposed in Annex III of document IHE/PMSO/6. In this respect, it was also mentioned that a timely preparation of the national reports, as requested by the UNCED Secretariat, would be useful in their preparation of documents for the ESCAP regional conference.

70. The Meeting recommended that the timing of the ESCAP regional preparatory meeting be advanced to February 1991, in order to provide the regional input to the second preparatory meeting of the 1992 Conference which is scheduled to begin on 18 March 1991. In view of the heavy schedule of international environmental meetings, a suggestion was made to hold this preparatory meeting back-to-back with the proposed meeting of government-nominated experts on the further elaboration of the

regional strategy and action plan as discussed under agenda item 8.

71. With respect to the prioritization of issues, it was mentioned that this is a difficult task requiring additional efforts on the part of the Governments and of the ESCAP secretariat. As it is not possible to have regional priorities in the great diversity of situations in the ESCAP region, it was proposed to concentrate on a limited number of common issues such as climate change, discharge of wastes, pollution issues and transfer of technology and resources.

72. The Meeting emphasized the necessity to pay more attention to the developmental aspects and especially on their interlinkages with the environmental issues because they observed that this matter had been insufficiently highlighted during the first substantive preparatory meeting of UNCED in August 1990 at Nairobi.

73. The Meeting stressed the importance of the timely preparations of the national reports for the UNCED preparatory process and expressed their appreciation for the technical assistance offered to them by UNDP, ADB, World Bank and Japan in this respect.

74. Some delegations expressed their concern that some unique and characteristic input on subregional issues may not be adequately injected into the UNCED preparatory process, and proposed to have subregional inputs prepared. The Meeting was informed that the Pacific Island countries will contribute to UNCED as agreed to by the Intergovernmental Meeting of SPREP, the details of which are to be elaborated and endorsed by a Ministerial Meeting in French Polynesia in 1991.

75. The Meeting supported the recommendations at Nairobi session of the Preparatory Committee to the Conference in Brazil in 1992 to hold that Conference at the level of heads of states and governments which undoubtedly will raise the efficiency of its

recommendations concerning the solution of global ecological problems.

76. The Meeting considered that the widest possible participation of the NGOs in the preparation of the Conference in 1992 would have a substantial impact on achieving positive results and invited the Preparatory Committee to work out a form of involving NGOs to the preparatory process.

77. The Meeting concluded that the ESCAP regional input into the UNCED process should, wherever possible, reflect the national and subregional priorities and hoped that the national contributions for the preparation of regional inputs would be transmitted to the secretariat as soon as possible.

VIII. OTHER MATTERS

(Item 10 of the agenda)

78. The Meeting agreed to recommend the following draft of the Ministerial declaration for consideration by the Ministers:

QUOTE:

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

1. We, the Ministers of the ESCAP region, representing more than half of the global population, met at Bangkok, Thailand, from 15 to 16 October 1990 at the Ministerial-level Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific;

2. Recalling resolution 267(XLIV) of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific adopted at Jakarta in 1988 and the United Nations Development Programme Governing Council decision 90/20 adopted at its 38th meeting in 1990;

3. Recalling also the United Nations General Assembly resolution 44/228 on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be held in 1992 and recognizing the importance accorded to regional inputs to that Conference;

4. Deeply concerned about the threat to environmentally sound and sustainable development due to environmental degradation and the depletion of natural resources in the ESCAP region and other adverse conditions, as highlighted in

the Report on the State of the Environment for Asia and the Pacific 1990 such as forest destruction, desertification, watershed degradation, soil erosion, waterlogging and salinization, flooding, destruction of mangroves and corals, loss of biological diversity and pollution of air and water, as well as the ozone layer depletion and the potential rise in sea level and other expected impact of climate change associated with the emission of the greenhouse gases;

5. Reiterating that poverty, population pressure and environmental degradation are closely interrelated and that environmental protection in the developing countries of the region must, in this context, be viewed as an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it;

6. Affirming that the major cause of the continuing deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of production and consumption, particularly in industrialized countries, and that the responsibility for containing, reducing and eliminating environmental damage must be borne by the countries causing such damage, must be in relation to the damage caused and must be in accordance with their respective capabilities and responsibilities;

7. Recognizing the urgent need for all countries to intensify efforts to protect and improve the quality of the environment at national, sub-regional, regional and global levels, wherever relevant, by adopting an approach in which economic growth should be directed towards environmentally sound and sustainable development;

8. Recognizing further that the developing countries have specific concerns and needs which should be given special attention in any global effort for the protection of the environment;

9. Acknowledging the need to address the special environmental problems of relevant small island developing countries of the region;

10. Stressing that the current international economic situation should be improved in order to remove obstacles hampering environmentally sound and sustainable development, particularly in the developing countries with special attention to the least developing countries of the region;

11. Realizing that the majority of the developing countries in the region lack the necessary financial and other resources and technologies for them to participate effectively in the global and regional efforts for environmental protection;

12. Recognizing further the diverse economic conditions and consequently, varying technological, financial and other capabilities of the countries in the region, and the opportunities arising therefrom for strengthening regional co-operation to achieve environmentally sound and sustainable development;

13. Reaffirming the objectives in the operative paragraphs 15 (j) and (m) of Part I of the United Nations General Assembly resolution 44/228 on the need for new and additional financial resources and on favourable access to

and transfer of environmentally sound technologies, in particular to the developing countries, for achieving environmentally sound and sustainable development;

We, the Ministers:

14. Commit ourselves to adopt an integrated approach to environment and development, and wherever possible and in accordance with our priorities and capabilities to incorporate environmental considerations into economic planning with a view to effecting the coordinated development of our economies and environment;

15. Believe that all economic and social development activities should meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs;

16. Affirm the crucial importance of maintaining the proper balance between economic development, population growth, the rational use of natural resources and environmental protection;

17. Urge countries in the region to adopt effective and sound population policies and accompanying measures for that purpose;

18. Affirm that States have the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their social, economic and environmental policies, ensuring that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of

national jurisdiction;

19. Believe that, to achieve sustainable development, policies must be based on the precautionary principle;

20. Affirm the important role of science and technology in economic development, environmental protection and population planning, especially the popularization and wider use of related science and technologies, in particular in the rural areas in the developing countries, in achieving this goal;

21. Emphasize the need for all countries and relevant international agencies to intensify their cooperation to support and assist the developing countries of the region in such efforts;

22. Welcome and pledge our full support for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be held in Brazil in 1992 and call for measures to ensure the full and active participation of ESCAP members and associate members in the preparatory process for the Conference, in particular the developing countries;

23. Recognize that adequate resources will be needed for the implementation of activities agreed to in this Declaration, and urge all donor governments and agencies to make appropriate voluntary contributions so that actions identified can be implemented;

24. Welcome the important ongoing work on the elaboration of a Regional Strategy on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development and call for its early completion;

25. Request the ESCAP secretariat to convene meeting(s) of representatives of members and associate members of the Commission to follow up our decisions, particularly to elaborate a Regional Strategy on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development and to continue preparation of the regional contribution to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development;

26. Request also the Executive Secretary of ESCAP, in consultation with representatives from the relevant United Nations agencies and bodies, multilateral funding organizations and governments to find ways and means to enhance effectiveness of co-operation and co-ordination in the development and implementation of regional environment and development activities as envisaged by this Declaration;

27. Affirm the right of individuals and non-governmental organizations to be informed of environmental problems relevant to them, to have necessary access to information, and to participate in the formulation and implementation of decisions likely to affect their environment;

28. Recommend the strengthening of activities of non-governmental organizations, the promotion of public awareness and people's participation in environmental protection and management activities;

29. Reaffirm the necessity to promote environmental education, especially of the younger generations, as well as other measures to increase awareness of the value of the environment;

30. Welcome and encourage the efforts to establish research, training, policy and other institutes/centres dealing with environment and development activities with a view to promoting exchange of information, technical assistance and regional co-operation for activities relevant to environmentally sound and sustainable development, and agree that the ESCAP should play an important role to promote the formulation of a regional network of such institutes/centres;

31. Welcome the participation of the Asia-Pacific UNDP Regional Resident Representatives at this Conference which will enable them to better assist in the effective follow-up activities;

32. Further request the Executive Secretary of ESCAP to keep the progress of implementation of this Declaration under review and report to the annual sessions of the Commission.

UNQUOTE

IX. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

79. The Report was unanimously adopted by the Meeting.