



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Forty-seventh session
1-10 April 1991
Seoul

REPORTS OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES, AND REVIEW OF THE WORK OF THE
COMMISSION AND ESCAP REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING PROGRAMME
OF WORK AND PRIORITIES, 1992-1993: ENVIRONMENT: FOLLOW-UP TO
THE MINISTERIAL-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND
DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC AND
OTHER ISSUES AND PROGRAMMES

(Item 7 (e) of the provisional agenda)

POLICIES AND PERSPECTIVES ON THE ENVIRONMENT IN ASIA AND
THE PACIFIC: THE CHALLENGES OF THE 1990s

Note by the secretariat

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	1
I. REVIEW OF RECENT ACTIVITIES RELATED TO ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT!	2
II. POLICY ORIENTATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND CO-ORDINATION	9
III. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION	12
A. Regional co-operation	12
B. Exchange of information	13
C. Poverty	14
D. Land degradation	14
E. Unsustainable village environment	15
F. Pollution	15
G. Industry, urbanization and technology	16

ANNEXES

I. Draft terms of reference for a regional network of environment and policy research institutions	17
II. Proposed terms of reference for an inter-agency co-ordinating group on the environment in Asia and the Pacific	18
III. Draft terms of reference for a regional working group on the marine environment and oceanographic institutions	20

Introduction

1. The state of the environment in the Asian and Pacific region is deteriorating rapidly and the trends are that such deterioration will reach alarming dimensions in the 1990s, as reported in State of the Environment in Asia and the Pacific, 1990. To reverse those trends, environmental considerations must be integrated into the development process. Reorientation of the development process is not an easy task. It will require difficult choices and decisive action at the national level to ensure that resources are used in a more rational and efficient way. But national efforts will not be enough. The transboundary causes and effects of environmental degradation are now on such a large scale that sustainable development cannot be achieved without concerted action by all countries of the region. Regional co-operation is essential to meet this challenge. It is therefore encouraging to note that to some degree this need has been realized in the region. The challenges of the 1990s will be to accentuate the necessary policy and institutional changes and to promote regional co-operation for achieving environmentally sound and sustainable development in the region.

2. In general, the agenda for action in achieving sustainable development for all countries of the region, whether developed, developing or newly industrializing, is to achieve a shift toward environmentally sound and sustainable development. This must be accompanied by the adoption and application of a new concept of sustainable economic growth. The 1990s are crucial for the formulation and implementation of action programmes directed at the pressing environmental concerns of the region. National, subregional, regional and global efforts must be combined into an integrated agenda for action. Failure in this respect could result in irreparable damage to the environment and elimination of future development alternatives for the countries in the region. Therefore, in the 1990s and as the twenty-first century approaches, there should be strong commitment and an accelerated programme for achieving sustainable development and alleviation of poverty and solving associated environmental problems.

I. REVIEW OF RECENT ACTIVITIES RELATED TO ENVIRONMENTALLY
SOUND AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

3. The ESCAP/UNDP Meeting of Eminent Persons on Greening the Development Process was held at Bangkok in October 1989 to develop an initial framework for a regional strategy on environmentally sound and sustainable development; experts on environment and development from all over the world met to suggest approaches for such a strategy.

4. The Meeting grouped environmental issues facing the region into four major areas:

- (i) Institutional and administrative reform;
- (ii) Economic policy, trade and resource accounts;
- (iii) Industry, transport, urbanization and technology;
- (iv) Public participation and education.

The recommendations concerning the first set of issues included increasing security of land tenure in rural areas, decentralizing decision-making to the village level wherever possible, backing environmental legislation with better enforcement capabilities, establishing an information and communication network among the region's environment and development institutes, and providing greater support for local agents of change, such as non-governmental organizations.

5. The recommendations concerning the second set of issues addressed the effect of third world debt on the environment, the adequacy of standard adjustment lending and project appraisal techniques in treating environmental issues; the need for greater energy efficiency; and adjustments to economic policy, trade regimes and national accounting systems necessary for harmonizing the three issues with resource management goals.

6. Recommendations concerning the third set of issues called for more environmentally benign production processes and upgrading of environmental impact assessment, while those for the fourth set addressed the need for universal environmental education.

7. The Asia/Pacific Consultative Meeting on the Conservation of Critical Ecosystems and Economic Development was held at Bangkok in October-November 1989. It was hosted by the UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and sponsored by several international and non-governmental agencies working in Asia and the Pacific: ESCAP, UNEP Regional Office, World Bank,

Asian Development Bank (ADB), International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), World Resources Institute (WRI) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF)-United States of America. Focusing solely on the problem of the loss of biodiversity in the region, the Meeting reviewed approaches and constraints to the conservation of biological resources at the country, regional and international levels. It also identified possibilities for financing and implementing biodiversity conservation activities in Asia and the Pacific.

8. Two relatively more global aims of the Meeting were to determine the degree of international interest in supporting biodiversity conservation programmes, and to provide a forum that would allow key officials in the region to exchange views on the shape such programmes might take.

9. The Expert Group Meeting on the Report on the State of the Environment in Asia and the Pacific, organized by ESCAP, was held at Bangkok in April-May 1990 to consider a draft version of the report on the state of the environment. The Meeting made recommendations for finalizing the report, and the country representatives benefited greatly from the Meeting as it provided a forum for discussion of issues of regional concern in preparation for the Ministerial-level Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific held in October 1990. The report, State of the Environment in Asia and the Pacific, 1990, was published in October 1990.

10. The ESCAP/UNDP Expert Group Meeting on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development was held at Jomtien, Thailand in June 1990. The discussions covered a broad range of issues, as follows:

- (i) The regional implications of global environmental problems;
- (ii) The status of implementation of the recommendations of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), and further measures to be taken in respect of the Asian and Pacific region;
- (iii) Regional co-operation in the field of the environment in the Asian and Pacific region;
- (iv) The draft regional strategy on sustainable development;
- (v) The role of the media and non-governmental organizations in promoting environmentally sound and sustainable development.

11. The Ministerial-level Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific was held at Bangkok in October 1990. It was attended by ministers and representatives of 44 members and associate members of ESCAP, observers from 10 countries, representatives from 21 United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, and intergovernmental organizations, and 8 non-governmental and other organizations. Three other activities were held in conjunction with the Meeting: the NGO/Media Symposium on Communication for Environment; CLEANTECH'90, an exhibition of clean technologies and products which also included a photographic exhibition; and a children's painting competition on the theme "Technology and the environment".

12. The Ministerial Conference adopted the Ministerial Declaration on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific. The Conference supported ESCAP efforts towards co-ordination of environment and development activities within the region, the development of a regional strategy for environmentally sound and sustainable development, and preparation of the regional input into the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be held in Brazil in 1992. The report of the Conference held in 1990 is submitted as a separate paper (E/ESCAP/767) for consideration by the Commission.

13. The delegations attending the Conference generally shared the view that environmental problems could not be isolated from the national realities and international economic factors that continued to perpetuate poverty, and that initiatives to overcome environmental problems would require concerted regional and international co-operation based on the principle of equitable sharing of responsibilities.

14. Several delegations pointed to the environmental impact of the current international economic system and called for commodity agreements and innovative trade and investment regulations that would make ecological sustainability possible. Those would call for substantial strengthening of regional and international co-operation.

15. A number of regional-level activities and initiatives have been undertaken as follow-up action to the WCED report Our Common Future since its publication in 1987. A pioneering attempt at operationalizing the WCED recommendations was the UNEP Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond, a document which was to provide a broad framework for guiding national action and international co-operation in promoting environmentally sound and sustainable development.

The Environmental Perspective makes several suggestions as to areas in which regional co-operation could be pursued.

- (1) International and regional co-operation should be used to intensify scientific research that creates or promotes the adoption of clean and clean-up technology.

These are matters that can be addressed by a regional network of research institutes or initiatives specializing in these areas.

- (2) Existing legal and technical activities of United Nations organizations, in closer co-operation with regional organizations, should progressively establish international agreements and monitoring mechanisms:

- (a) To deal with spills of hazardous substances and other industrial accidents;
- (b) To control the transport, storage, management and disposal of hazardous industrial wastes;
- (c) To settle disputes involving damages and claims for compensation.

These are matters that clearly must be addressed at the regional level by an appropriate convention or protocol.

- (3) Deteriorating terms of trade and stabilizing international commodity prices at equitable levels should be corrected through international commodity agreements.

This is expected to limit pressure on the natural resource base caused by third-world debt pressure or foreign exchange requirements. The negotiating power of the countries of the region would clearly be increased by approaching global-level forums for such negotiations as a unified bloc rather than as disparate negotiating entities.

- (4) A comprehensive data base relating to the environment should be established for use in planning action programmes for the restoration and preservation of the environment.

This is an activity that would best be undertaken at the regional level, although co-operation with such activities at the global level would be highly productive.

- (5) Development planning should take environmental considerations into account.

The first step in acting on this recommendation might be the convening of a regional workshop or symposium, or establishing a forum for the purpose of demonstrating to national development planners how environmental considerations might be taken into account in national development plans.

17. Another important UNEP initiative is its Programme for the Protection of Oceans and Coastal Areas, which consists of three components, the global marine environment, the regional marine environment and living marine resources. Of these, the centrepiece is the Regional Seas Programme.

18. The efforts of ESCAP to promote regional co-operation have focused on improving the co-ordination of environment and development activities in the region. In the early 1980s, the ESCAP secretariat initiated the preparation of a series of country-specific coastal environmental management plans, an activity that is continuing with generous assistance from the Government of Norway.

19. The plans require intensive multidisciplinary studies encompassing socio-economics, industry, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, water resources, energy, ecology, environmental health and sanitation, and marine pollution. Plans have been prepared for Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Tonga, and a plan for Pakistan is being finalized.

20. While there is growing demand for development of these plans for other countries, implementation of the completed plans is viewed as being as important as the preparation of additional plans. Most follow-up activities of coastal environmental management plans focus on strengthening and supporting institutional infrastructure, regional co-operation in coastal environmental management, and establishment of monitoring and research activities on a continuing basis. In order to accelerate the development of the plans, it is proposed to develop guidelines for the preparation of plans by the maritime countries of the region.

21. The UNEP Regional Seas Programme provides a broad framework within which activities may be initiated for the protection of the marine environment and related ecosystems, while the country-specific coastal environmental management plans developed by ESCAP address the socio-economic and environmental issues of the coastal communities of the region. The two programmes are viewed as interlinked and complementary.

22. In 1986, ESCAP established the Regional Network of Research and Training Centres on Desertification Control in Asia and the Pacific. It also established the recently renamed Asia-Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists and national forums of environmental journalists in 12 Asian countries, and convened the Regional Conference on Media and the Environment in Asia at Bangkok in 1988 to encourage the media to report on WCED recommendations and other local, national and regional environmental matters. This was later followed up by the NGO/Media Symposium on Communication for Environment held in October 1990 in conjunction with the Ministerial-level Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific. An ongoing project executed by ESCAP with UNDP support aims at developing environmentally sound and sustainable national and regional strategies, policies and action plans.

23. As a response to the WCED recommendations, ADB undertook studies for analysing the environmental impact of overall economic policies. In 1988, it launched studies funded by technical assistance grants in seven countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka). These studies aimed at the goal of directly translating the WCED recommendations into achievable national programmes.

24. The major focus of these and similar studies planned for the next few years is on the management of natural resources and the environment through modifications in the entire spectrum of economic policies and programmes. The focus of these studies is thus more on putting into place environmentally benign policies relating to budgeting, pricing, levies, taxes, subsidies, debt management and trade policy.

25. Other regional- and global-level activities relating to environmentally sound and sustainable development include a project begun by the WHO Division of Environmental Health which aims at creating and maintaining networks of teaching and research staff in government, universities, industry and non-governmental organizations devoted to reducing environmental health hazards.

26. At the subregional level, there are three intergovernmental programmes active in the region: the ASEAN Environment Programme (ASEP) and associated activities, the South Asian Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

27. ASEAN co-operation in matters relating to the environment began as early as 1977 when a draft ASEAN subregional environment programme (ASEP I)

was prepared with UNEP assistance for the five-year period 1978-1982. A second phase (ASEP II) for the period 1983-1988 was also prepared, while the third phase (ASEP III) covers the current programming period which ends in 1992.

28. ASEAN co-operation in the field of the environment has been strengthened by a number of official declarations and agreements. These include the Manila Declaration on the ASEAN Environment of 30 April 1981, the ASEAN Declaration on Heritage Parks and Reserves of 29 November 1984, the Bangkok Declaration on the ASEAN Environment of 29 November 1984, and the Agreement on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources of 9 July 1985.

29. On 30 October 1987, just as the WCED report was being finalized, the Third ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment approved the Jakarta Resolution on Sustainable Development. Through this resolution, the Meeting adopted the principle of sustainable development as the guiding and integrating factor in the common effort of ASEAN to promote rational management of the subregion's natural resource base and environment. The Jakarta Resolution was also endorsed by the Third Meeting of ASEAN Heads of Government held at Manila in December 1987. The resolution facilitated the establishment of the ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment (ASOEN). Sustainable development was again the key factor in the Kuala Lumpur Accord on Environment and Development issued by the ASEAN ministers in June 1990.

30. The Governing Council of SACEP also recognizes the need to integrate environmental considerations into the economic development process, a major recommendation of the WCED report. However, its work has thus far remained limited owing to financial and institutional constraints. A major SACEP initiative carried out in collaboration with UNEP was the preparation of the South Asian Regional Seas Programme.

31. Since its establishment in 1982, SPREP has strongly emphasized marine and coastal ecosystems, an issue that received substantial emphasis in the WCED report. SPREP initiatives also include education and training activities for improving member country capabilities for dealing with environment-related problems at the regional and international levels. While most SPREP projects are country-specific, a range of its projects contribute to a regional data base and co-ordinated environmental action at the subregional level. SPREP also liaises with international organizations concerned with South Pacific environmental issues.

32. In April 1990, UNDP sponsored the Regional Workshop on Environmental Management and Sustainable Development in the South Pacific held under SPREP auspices at Suva, at which matters of mutual concern to the South Pacific island developing countries were discussed. The major issues addressed by the Meeting were the impact of tourism on the environment; the effects of forestry operations on the soils and water resources of small islands; the impact of industrial development on the coastal and marine ecosystems of Pacific islands; the effects of mining on island environments; techniques for upgrading environmental impact assessment in island communities; the role of environmental education in achieving sustainable development; and issues relating to pollution and waste disposal in the South Pacific.

II. POLICY ORIENTATION, IMPLEMENTATION AND CO-ORDINATION

33. The future environmental situation of each country and the region as a whole provides the context for the formulation of a policy agenda for environmentally sound and sustainable development. Of crucial significance to both are the demographic and industrialization trends projected for the region.

34. The population of the ESCAP region is expected to increase from 2.88 billion in 1988 to over 4 billion in 2010. The most important issue in meeting this challenge is how to break the cycle of poverty, rapid population growth and environmental deterioration.

35. While a few countries of the region have been successful in lowering population growth rates (for example, Indonesia and Thailand), most countries are attempting to break the cycle through rapid economic growth via industrialization. While this is a laudable goal for most developing countries, including those that have succeeded in lowering their population growth rates, care must be taken in any industrialization drive to safeguard the environment.

36. From the perspective of the region's ecosystem as a whole, the next most important issue is ecologically detrimental changes in land use. The high rate of conversion of natural forests and grasslands into croplands in the region is alarming, and it is likely that this trend will continue for many years because the factors causing it are not easily eliminated. Landlessness, another result of rapid population growth, is increasing as well, particularly in South and South-East Asia.

37. Escalating demand for food makes it virtually certain that the environmental problems associated with deforestation - intensive use of agro-chemicals, waterlogging and salinity in heavily irrigated areas, and loss of productivity of marginal lands - will be aggravated in the coming years. The central issue in managing the region's land ecosystem is thus the prevention of further net deforestation and land degradation while assuring a secure supply of food and fuelwood for the region's population and protecting the rights of traditional cultivators.

38. In the case of inland waters, the challenge is how to meet the region's increasing demand for potable water in a world of ever-increasing threats to water quality. This is a particularly pressing problem since more than one third of the region's population lacks a safe supply of drinking water.

39. With regard to the marine environment, the single most important challenge is the establishment and strengthening of environmental management systems through national initiatives and international co-operation. The ecological stress confronting the region's coastal areas is already severe, and shows no signs of abating within the next half century. In both the terrestrial and marine environments, loss of genetic diversity owing to poaching by landless and desperate rural people is becoming a serious problem.

40. While the effect of rapid population growth, poverty and environmental deterioration is starkly visible in the rural environment, degradation of the urban environment will increasingly become a pressing issue for the region's resource managers during the first two decades of the twenty-first century. Rapid urbanization resulting from rural-urban migration will be the dominant feature of the region's urban environment during the next three decades. This poses a dilemma for policy makers: how to industrialize rapidly enough to break the cycle of poverty while at the same time minimizing deterioration of the urban environment.

41. Most of the responses to the region's environmental crisis during the past 20 years have focused on remedial measures. The environmental problems now facing the region's resource managers are so great that after-the-fact solutions will clearly be insufficient to meet the challenge. While effects-oriented measures will continue to be necessary, source-oriented measures must increasingly demand priority if environmental degradation is to be slowed or reversed during the coming decades. Thus,

/the

the regional agenda for environmental action will necessarily have to focus on the causes of environmental degradation.

42. To address effectively the issues outlined above, policy implementation should have four areas of emphasis: establishing or strengthening environmental institutions; improving environmental planning; supporting appropriate environmental technologies; and promoting environmental awareness. Of equal importance will be the integration of policy elements and the co-ordination of programmes for environmentally sound and sustainable development at the national, regional and international levels.

43. At the national level, the most pressing need is for development and implementation of country strategies for environmentally sound and sustainable development. The major focus of such strategies should be efficiency of resource use. These strategies must also ensure that each sectoral department and each government institution concerned with economic development incorporates environmentally sound and sustainable development into its work programme. Mandates of sectoral ministries and other governmental agencies should also explicitly state their responsibility and accountability for sustainable development and the environmental protection responsibilities within their purview.

44. While much of the action for achieving environmentally sound and sustainable development will have to be taken by national Governments, concerted and co-operative action at the regional level will also be necessary. Regional co-ordination will be particularly essential to ensure that country-level action does not work at cross purposes. Finally, mechanisms will be needed at the regional level to promote co-operation between Governments, non-governmental organizations and regional organizations to ensure maximum benefits from individual efforts towards achieving environmentally sound and sustainable development.

45. In the developing countries of the ESCAP region, in most cases the costs of solving problems such as deforestation, desertification and pollution can not be met from resources within the region. Thus, financing of environmentally sound and sustainable development initiatives will almost certainly have to come from external sources. Furthermore, many of the region's environmental problems are so bound up with global environmental issues that efforts at halting or reversing environmental degradation in the region will have to be closely co-ordinated with efforts outside the region.

III. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

46. The activities and analysis presented in the previous sections point to the fact that initiatives aimed at achieving environmentally sound and sustainable development and regional co-operation in the field of the environment are expanding rapidly. However, the progress achieved thus far has been modest relative to the effort that will be required for achieving sustainable development.

47. The Commission may wish to direct the secretariat to undertake necessary activities for the establishment of the regional network of environment and policy research institutions and other networks and programmes proposed for the promotion of environmentally sound and sustainable development, as explained in paragraphs 48-61 below. In that respect, the Commission may wish to note the Declaration adopted by the Ministerial-level Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific encouraging ESCAP to play an important role in promoting the formulation of a network of institutes and centres.

A. Regional co-operation

48. So many of the region's environmental problems transcend national boundaries that achieving environmentally sound and sustainable development on a region-wide basis will not be possible without a much greater degree of regional co-operation than now exists. But what form should regional co-operation in the field of the environment take? In general, the answer to that question is that it should serve two purposes: (1) it should address regional environmental problems, and (2) it should strengthen national efforts and capabilities in addressing those problems.

49. This means that regional co-operation efforts in the field of the environment should facilitate national action by providing a setting at the regional level that is conducive to and provides a model for national action. Regional initiatives of this type might include the setting up of networks of development policy institutes, and technical or scientific institutes that address environmental problems at the regional level, or networks of community action groups such as non-governmental organizations. Examples of regional initiatives of this type are given in annexes I-III to the present document.

50. Co-operation is necessary at the regional level to ensure that regional approaches to solving global environmental problems are consistent,

/complementary

complementary and effective. Regional forums are needed to ensure that the Governments of the Asian and Pacific region speak with a powerful and unified voice at forums convened for addressing global environmental issues such as the global commons, depletion of the ozone layer, loss of biodiversity, and global climate change.

51. There are numerous problems relating to environmental degradation that affect a number of the countries of the region, and therefore a regional or subregional approach will be necessary if these problems are to be resolved quickly and effectively. For example, most experts on degradation of the marine environment in the region are quick to point out that it is the coastal environment rather than the region's open oceans that are under the most serious threat. An important step in resolving coastal environmental degradation issues is the formation of a working group of research institutions that address coastal environmental problems. The terms of reference for such a working group are given in annex III.

52. The Commission may wish to draw the attention of the member and associate members of ESCAP to the importance of proper management of the coastal environment. In this respect, it may provide guidance to the secretariat in developing country-specific coastal environmental management plans with the involvement of concerned institutions in the proposed working group in referred to the preceding paragraph.

53. The recommendations made by numerous meetings, summarized in the previous section, demonstrate that the technical expertise necessary for solving environmental problems of all types is in scarce supply in virtually all developing countries of the region. Regional initiatives ensuring that adequate amounts of appropriate technical expertise are provided to facilitate the resolution of environmental problems at the national and subnational levels are necessary if sustainable development is to be achieved throughout the region. The Commission's guidance on this issue is sought.

B. Exchange of information

54. A regional environmental data and information clearing-house would greatly facilitate the gathering and dissemination of data relating to the environment in the region, and would make a strong contribution to national efforts towards environmental protection. In addition to monitoring and reporting, this function might include a centralized source of information pertaining to proposed, ongoing and completed environmental projects in the

/region.

region. A centralized source of information of this type would reduce duplication of effort, provide far better co-ordination among donor organizations, and disseminate information concerning both successful and less successful approaches to solving the problem of unsustainability. The terms of reference for such a group are given in annex II.

55. The Commission may wish to welcome recommendation (4) in paragraph 16 above and guide the secretariat with regard to following up the recommendation for the establishment of a comprehensive data base on the environment for the region, after the necessary consultation with UNEP.

C. Poverty

56. While poverty is as much a socio-economic as an environmental issue, so far its main focus has been on the socio-economic aspect. In the countries where this approach has had any success, this was attributed to the implementation of a two-part strategy:

- (a) The pursuance of a pattern of growth that ensures productive use of the poor's most abundant asset-labour;
- (b) Widespread provision to the poor of basic social services, especially primary education, primary health care and family planning.

57. Poverty has been identified as the cause as well as the effect of environmental degradation. Yet not enough is known about the poverty-environment relationship. Concrete efforts at the regional and subregional levels will be necessary to address the issue of the environment-poverty relationship. A first step would be to convene a regional-level workshop or an expert group meeting to discuss the effects of the environment on poverty and to focus on the relationship between the two. The discussion would include the relative success of the various approaches of national poverty alleviation programmes on improvement of the environment, and vice versa. This would lead to better understanding of the issues of the environment which could help in alleviating poverty. The programme would be implemented taking into consideration its multidisciplinary nature.

D. Land degradation

58. In some countries of the region, natural resources are heavily underpriced, which encourages their indiscriminate use and consequently leads to accelerated depletion of the natural resource base. While the

/decision

Decision to subsidize some natural resources (such as water or energy) is entirely up to the national Government concerned, the prices of many exported natural resources are set at levels far below their full social cost. It is therefore proposed to work towards the formulation and adoption of regional commodity price agreements to reduce the present rate of depletion and degradation of the resources of the region. Such agreements would also catalyse unified regional action and negotiation at global forums where international commodity agreements are formulated and endorsed. To be effective, such price agreements must be arranged at the regional level.

E. Unsustainable village environment

59. In many areas, the village environment is becoming unsustainable due to heavy and often indiscriminate use of agro-chemicals. Users of agro-chemicals in the developing countries of the region are rarely trained in their proper selection, use, application and personal protection and the hazards resulting from their use. Training manuals and materials on the appropriate use of agro-chemicals need to be developed at the regional and subregional levels. While some basic materials of this type exist (for example, the Handbook on the Use of Pesticides in the Asia and the Pacific), these have not been widely adapted in individual countries and agro-climatic regions. A programme at the regional level is proposed in order to intensify the efforts towards dissemination of information about the hazards of agro-chemicals, highlighting their impact on the environment, and to promote environmentally sound alternatives.

F. Pollution

60. As yet, no environmental assessment and enforcement mechanisms for transboundary environmental problems exist at the regional level, although the effects of such problems are widespread in the region. In addition to measures being taken for pollution abatement in urban areas, it is necessary to establish conventions and protocols that will limit the transboundary effects. A first step in this regard would be to evolve a concerted programme for ensuring environmentally sound handling, storage and disposal of hazardous materials at the regional level. This should lead to such steps as are required to reduce risks resulting from the handling or presence of such materials, and regional agreements to ban or drastically reduce the import of such materials into the region.

G. Industry, urbanization and technology

61. Current production and conversion processes are responsible for a large share of environmental degradation in the region. While these processes have allowed the region to achieve impressive rates of economic growth, such growth will not be sustainable in the absence of environmentally benign production and energy conversion processes. A network of regional research institutions devoted to the creation or promotion of clean and clean-up technologies would help catalyse additional research in this area and promote the adoption of environmentally benign technologies.

/ANNEXES

ANNEXES

Annex I

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A REGIONAL NETWORK OF ENVIRONMENT
AND POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

Purpose:

The primary purpose of the network is the exchange and dissemination of information concerning environmental degradation in the Asian and Pacific region and its causes and solutions. It is envisioned that such exchange and dissemination would facilitate the formulation of national, subregional and regional action plans aimed at achieving environmentally sound and sustainable development in the region. Initially, this network would guide the implementation of the ESCAP/UNDP regional project on managing the environmental dimensions of sound and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific.

Composition:

Four types of institution would be invited to join the regional network: existing regional centres, national technical research and training institutions, relevant private sector organizations such as chambers of commerce, and national policy research institutes on environment and development. Governments of ESCAP members and associate members would be invited to nominate focal points to this network. It is envisioned that the representative nominated by the potential member institution would be the director or alternate director of that institution, or a similarly high-ranking officer.

Financing:

The establishment of the network would be supported through the UNDP-financed regional project mentioned above. The participating institutions might later consider its continuation with their own funding support.

Start-up date:

It is envisioned that the regional network would be established and operational, at least on a provisional basis, before the end of 1991.

Annex II

PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR AN INTER-AGENCY CO-ORDINATING
GROUP ON THE ENVIRONMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Purpose:

The primary purpose of the inter-agency co-ordinating group would be to enhance co-ordination and strengthen regional co-operation in formulating, implementing, reviewing, monitoring and reporting on initiatives relating to environmentally sound and sustainable development in the Asian and Pacific region. It would encourage the exchange and dissemination of information concerning environmental degradation problems and their solutions that are common to, or that commonly occur in, the countries of the Asian and Pacific basin. It is envisioned that the activities of the group would facilitate the formulation of national, subregional and regional action plans and initiatives aimed at achieving environmentally sound and sustainable development in the region.

A major activity of the group would be acting as an information clearing-house for environment- and development-oriented activities and initiatives undertaken in the Asian and Pacific region.

Composition:

The group would comprise representatives of United Nations agencies and bodies, international organizations, development banks, multilateral agencies and non-governmental organizations and other institutions involved in environment and development activities in the Asian and Pacific region. It would also include any such organization active in the region that communicates a desire to be a member of the group. The member organizations would initially include the United Nations Centre for Science and Technology for Development (UNCSTD), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization

of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Initial Framework: Initially, each member organization would designate a focal point, which could comprise an in-house person, or group of persons, who would initially be responsible for all communication between the inter-agency co-ordinating group and the organization. The secretariat of ESCAP would play the co-ordinating role as expressed in the Declaration adopted by the Ministerial-level Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 1990.

Financing: Participation and other costs would be borne by the individual organization.

Start-up date: It is envisioned that the inter-agency co-ordinating group would be established and operational, at least on a provisional basis, before the end of 1991.

Annex III

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A REGIONAL WORKING GROUP ON THE
MARINE ENVIRONMENT AND OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTIONS

Purpose:

The primary purpose of the regional working group would be to encourage research on and monitoring of the coastal and marine resource environment in the Asian and Pacific region. The group would also make publicly available information concerning coastal and marine resource degradation problems and their solutions that are common to, or that commonly occur in, the coastal and marine environment of the Asian and Pacific region. The group would also share and disseminate data and information concerning both successful and unsuccessful approaches to sustainable development of coastal and marine resources undertaken in countries within the region. It is expected that this information would ultimately be used to aid the formulation of national, subregional and regional action plans aimed at achieving environmentally sound and sustainable development of the region's coastal and marine resources. Initially the group would consider the preparation of guidelines for the development of coastal environmental management plans to be followed up by country-specific plans and implementation of the recommendations of the plans. In this process, efforts would be made to develop the institutional capabilities of developing countries of the ESCAP region in dealing with coastal environmental management through training and technical assistance. Governments of ESCAP members and associate members would be requested to designate focal points from the concerned institutions to be part of this working group. It is envisioned that the representative nominated from the potential member institution, agency or organization would be the director or alternate director of that institution, agency, organization or initiative, or a similarly high-ranking officer.

/Composition:

Composition:

Three types of bodies would be invited to join the regional working group:

- (i) Existing institutions active within the region that routinely conduct research or monitoring of the coastal or marine environment within the Asian and Pacific region.
- (ii) Development agencies that sponsor initiatives relating to the coastal or marine resource environment within the region.
- (iii) Agencies concerned with development and the environment that are active within the Asian and Pacific region. This latter group would include the Office for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea (United Nations Headquarters), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Oceanographic Commission (IOC) and other subregional programmes such as the ASEAN Environment Programme (ASEP), the South Asian Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). All similar institutions or agencies established after the proposed network becomes operational would be invited to join the network upon their communicating to it their desire to do so.

Financing:

The operational and development activities of the group would be supported through the ongoing extrabudgetary resources of ESCAP for protection of the marine environment and related ecosystems funded by the Norwegian Assistance Programme. The group might wish to continue its activities after its initial assignment related to coastal environmental management plans with its own financing. In that event, one of the national

/institutions

institutions would have to act as the co-ordinator of the group, or the co-ordination responsibility might be rotated among the participating institutions. This would be discussed when the terms of reference of the group were discussed further among the focal points.

Start-up date:

It is envisioned that the regional working group would be established and operational, at least on a provisional basis, before the end of 1991.

.