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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2005

Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials  
24-26 March 2005  
Seoul

**DRAFT  
MINISTERIAL DECLARATION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT  
IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, 2005**

(Item 6 of the provisional agenda)



## PREAMBLE

*We, the Ministers of Environment of the members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, having met in Seoul on 28 and 29 March 2005 at the fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2005,*

*Renewing our commitment to the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development<sup>1</sup> and the provisions of Agenda 21,<sup>2</sup> the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development,<sup>3</sup> in particular the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation,<sup>4</sup> which incorporates the priority initiatives of the Phnom Penh Regional Platform on Sustainable Development for Asia and the Pacific,<sup>5</sup> the Millennium Development Goals (2000), and the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,<sup>6</sup>*

*Noting in particular Millennium Development Goals one and seven, aimed respectively at eradicating poverty and hunger and ensuring environmental sustainability, and recognizing that these goals are mutually supportive,*

*Also noting chapter 4 of Agenda 21,<sup>2</sup> which emphasizes the importance of changing consumption patterns,*

*Reaffirming that Asia and the Pacific, as the fastest growing region in the world, with two thirds of the global population and the largest number of people suffering poverty and hunger, has a critical role to play in promoting global sustainable development,*

*Recognizing that failure to maintain consumption and production within carrying capacity in Asia and the Pacific would have a negative impact on the state of the environment throughout the world,*

*Also recognizing that economic growth is essential for the alleviation of poverty and for the provision of basic services to meet the needs of the expanding population of the region,*

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<sup>1</sup> *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex I.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, annex II.

<sup>3</sup> See *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I.

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

<sup>5</sup> E/CN.17/2002/PC.2/8.

<sup>6</sup> *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

*Noting with concern* that economic growth is also a source of serious pressure on the environment and that environmental sustainability in the region is at risk as economic growth continues in spite of the limited carrying capacity of the region,

*Realizing* that the current situation can be improved through the integration of economic development, social development and environmental protection, the three mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development,

*Considering* that, in the interest of present and future generations, it is imperative to shift the development orientation from the paradigm of “Grow now and clean up later” to that of “Greening economic growth”,

*Also considering* that improving environmental sustainability, while reducing poverty, is essential in our endeavours to achieve sustainable development and a higher quality of life,

*Agreeing* that a new paradigm of “green growth” should be promoted as the basis for improving environmental sustainability and attaining the Millennium Development Goals in the region,

*Extolling* the will and determination of the people and Governments of the Asian and Pacific region to mobilize all available resources, individually and collectively, and to make concerted efforts to promote a new green growth paradigm designed to ultimately contribute to sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific by means of the framework of activities described below,

*Make the following declaration:*

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND PERFORMANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF ECONOMIC GROWTH**

1. *We commit ourselves* to improving environmental sustainability by reducing the pressure of economic growth on the environment, which entails increasing production and consumption by means of the following:

(a) Incorporating environmental costs into market prices and using, wherever appropriate, such economic instruments as green accounting and taxation methods that are supportive of green growth as well as green procurement mechanisms;

(b) Enhancing cleaner production by promoting eco-efficiency, especially a reduction in the amount of energy and the number of materials used in the production of goods and services and the minimization of the waste and pollution emanating from production processes;

(c) Improving the environmental sustainability of consumption patterns by linking them with traditional lifestyles and cultural values and promoting a recycling society;

(d) Promoting models for synergy between economic development and environmental protection as a strategy for poverty reduction;

(e) Developing mechanisms for early warning systems to aid the management of disasters, including tsunamis, floods and drought, to minimize the risks to environmental sustainability;

(f) Undertaking activities to mitigate the adverse impact of climate change and promoting adaptation strategies accordingly.

2. *We resolve* to improve environmental performance by making laws and regulations more effective, which entails the following:

(a) Enhancing environmental performance and accountability in the public and private sectors through the meaningful and timely inclusion of stakeholders and the provision of access to information, participation and redress as key principles of environmental governance;

(b) Ensuring the timely and thorough implementation of multilateral environmental agreements to which we are party;

(c) Promoting the effective enforcement of laws, regulations and standards relating to sustainable development, including laws governing environmental impact assessments;

(d) Taking appropriate action to remedy or prevent further damage to ecosystems, particularly to prevent or remedy land degradation and the loss of biodiversity;

(e) Providing support for compliance;

(f) Strengthening the institutional structures and functions of national sustainable development commissions for the purpose of integrating policies regarding the three pillars of sustainable development, and promoting effective multi-stakeholder partnerships for the full participation of the private sector, civil society and all other major groups in the efforts to achieve sustainable development;

(g) Promoting the use of environmental sustainability and environmental performance indices, used to assess conditions and trends, as tools in the formulation of sustainable development policies;

(h) Promoting strategic planning and management with regard to natural resources and the environment;

(i) Ensuring that policies supportive of environmentally sustainable economic growth are simultaneously supportive of the social dimension of sustainable development.

3. *We agree* to promote the environment as a driver of economic growth and business opportunities and to negate the connotation that environmental considerations represent an obstacle or a constraint to economic growth by establishing a policy framework that encourages the following:

- (a) The promotion of environmental markets;
- (b) The promotion of environmental infrastructure investments, an environment industry and environmentally sound technologies;
- (c) The promotion of research and development in the above-mentioned fields;
- (d) The promotion of knowledge-sharing networks to exchange experiences and analyses on the linkage between poverty and environment with a view to highlighting pro-poor, pro-environment growth.

### **ROLE OF MAJOR GROUPS**

4. *We commit ourselves* to developing partnerships with the private sector, civil society and all groups, including citizens' groups and local community groups, in recognition of the fact that the participation of major groups is critical to sustainable development, with the goal of keeping consumption and production within carrying capacity by:

- (a) Adapting economic instruments with a view to achieving sustainability objectives through:
  - (i) The use of smart subsidies, taxes and other tools;
  - (ii) The internalization of environmental costs;
  - (iii) The promotion of a recycling economy;
  - (iv) The enhancement of demand-side management;
  - (v) The development of environmental markets;
  - (vi) The improvement of markets for green products;
- (b) Encouraging the private sector:
  - (i) To make use of environmental business opportunities;
  - (ii) To utilize environmental markets;
  - (iii) To adopt sustainable and clean production methods;
  - (iv) To develop environmentally safe products;
  - (v) To promote environmental goods and services;
  - (vi) To adopt investment patterns that support sustainable development;
- (c) Encouraging public/private partnerships for sustainable development;
- (d) Encouraging civil society in a vital role, that of improving the environmental sustainability of consumption, by:

- (i) Promoting environmental awareness among consumers of the environmental sustainability of their consumption patterns;
  - (ii) Facilitating consumer demand-side management;
  - (iii) Improving the environmental sustainability of consumption by linking it with traditional lifestyle, cultural and spiritual values;
- (e) Encouraging sustainable development as a component of education at all levels and enhanced public awareness of sustainable development.

**JOHANNESBURG PLAN OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REGIONAL  
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT,  
2006-2010**

5. *We resolve* to continue the efforts to implement the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, particularly the regional priority initiatives of the Phnom Penh Regional Platform as incorporated in the chapter on “Other regional initiatives” of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation<sup>7</sup> along with the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment,<sup>8</sup> acknowledging in this connection the positive steps taken by members and associate members of the Commission towards the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and its priority initiatives.

6. *We hereby adopt* the Regional Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development, 2006-2010, as a rational and viable instrument for achieving the common goal of sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific, and decide to take steps to implement it in accordance with the specific conditions of the respective countries and territories of the region, and to strengthen the institutional framework and promote capacity-building through cooperation at the regional and subregional levels.

7. *We endorse* the Seoul Initiative on Environmentally Sustainable Economic Growth, which addresses the emerging challenges highlighted in the Regional Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development, 2006-2010, with the goal of environmentally sustainable economic growth in Asia and the Pacific.

8. *We also endorse* the regional and subregional initiatives listed in the annex to the present Declaration, which were developed as a follow-up to the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the priority initiatives of the Phnom Penh Regional Platform as included in the chapter on “Other regional initiatives” of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

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<sup>7</sup> *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex, chap. IX, sect. B.

<sup>8</sup> Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, *Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific 2000, Kitakyushu, Japan, 31 August-5 September 2000: Ministerial Declaration, Regional Action Programme (2001-2005) and Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment* (ST/ESCAP/2096) (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.01.II.F.12), Part three.

9. *We support* the practical and focused activities and measures that have been undertaken for the implementation of the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment and endorse the Action Plan for the implementation of the Initiative as adopted by the Mayors and Senior Officials of member cities at the Third Meeting of the Kitakyushu Initiative Network, held in Kitakyushu, Japan, on 3 and 4 August 2004.
10. *We urge* the members and associate members of the Commission to ensure that the national strategies for sustainable development conceived in response to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development are formulated, developed and implemented in such a way as to assist fully in the integration of environment and economy and are themselves fully integrated into the national economic planning and implementation process.
11. *We request* the members and associate members of the Commission to ensure that the environmental concerns of poor and vulnerable groups are integrated into national planning and policy frameworks for poverty reduction.
12. *We also request* the members and associate members of the Commission to strengthen subregional sustainable development commissions and organizations.
13. *We emphasize* the importance of international cooperation in achieving sustainable development and remind the international community of the common but differentiated responsibilities that all actors bear in the effort to achieve sustainable development.
14. *We appeal* to donor countries, relevant United Nations bodies and agencies, multilateral financial institutions, other intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society to provide full support, including financial and technical support, for the implementation of the Regional Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development, 2006-2010, and its initiatives and projects.
15. *We decide* to review periodically the progress made in the implementation of the present Declaration and the Regional Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development, 2006-2010, and, in this context, request the Executive Secretary of the Commission to submit annual progress reports to the Commission for its consideration.
16. *We agree* to convene the sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific by the year 2010.



**Annex**

**Regional and subregional initiatives endorsed by the subregional and regional preparatory meetings**

<i>Area</i>	<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Main partners identified to date</i>	<i>Funding mechanisms and status</i>
<b>1. Regional</b> (to be added)			
<b>2. Subregional</b> (to be added)			
Central Asia	Programme for combating land degradation	ADB	ADB
North-East Asia	Dust and sand storm prevention and mitigation (phase II)	ADB, ESCAP, UNEP, UNCCD	ADB, GEF, national funding (in pipeline)
	Mitigation of climate change (innovative technologies and transport sector development)*	ESCAP	Funding required
South-East Asia	Education for sustainable development with a focus on sustainable consumption and production*	ESCAP, ASEAN, Consumer Association of the Republic of Korea	Funding required
South Asia	Poverty reduction through pro-poor public-private partnerships	ESCAP	ESCAP (Government of the Netherlands)
	Land degradation*	To be determined	Funding required
Pacific	Sustainable community lifestyle in Pacific island countries (focus areas: adaptation to climate change, ecotourism, natural resources management)	ESCAP, SPREP	Funding required

\* Concepts to be developed.

Definition of acronyms:

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
GEF	Global Environment Facility
SPREP	South Pacific Regional Environment Programme
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification secretariat
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

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