



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

**REPORT OF THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT
AND DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, 2000**

Kitakyushu, Japan, 4-5 September 2000

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I. MATTERS CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE COMMISSION OR BROUGHT TO ITS ATTENTION

1. The Conference expressed deep concern that the Asian and Pacific region was entering the new millennium with a deteriorated environment and enormous challenges for sustainable development. It therefore emphasized that a new paradigm for sustainable development was essential. The new paradigm would require essential policy reforms in environmental management, and related areas, both within and between governments. Achieving that would require, among other things, integrating policies within government programmes, adopting preventive approaches and cleaner development mechanisms, raising awareness, building partnerships between stakeholders and encouraging public participation, promoting sustainable production and consumption, the utilization of economic instruments, and public disclosure of information.
2. The Conference noted that the poverty situation existing in the region was the major obstacle to sustainable development, and recommended that integrated and participatory action plans in adequate detail should be drawn up and implemented to alleviate poverty while promoting sustainable development.
3. The Conference recognized the immediate need for undertaking action in areas where technological know-how and resources were available for environmental safeguards, such as the introduction of unleaded gasoline, catalytic converters in new vehicles, and the control of hazardous waste.
4. The Conference requested that assistance for capacity-building, transfer of technology and provision of financial resources to developing countries and economies in transition should be increased for the pursuit of sustainable development in areas such as sustainable and clean energy development, combating climate change, resource conservation and eco-efficiency.
5. The Conference stressed the need for the strengthening of global, regional and subregional cooperation for addressing common environmental problems, promoting technology transfer, information networking and dealing with the negative impacts of globalization.
6. The Conference recommended that the countries of the region should strengthen their commitments and efforts towards protecting the environment and improving the quality of life of all people living in both rural and urban areas, with special focus on vulnerable groups such as children and women.
7. The Conference further recommended that evaluation of institutions at the national and regional levels in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Regional Action Programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development should provide an opportunity to strengthen national policies and regional cooperation initiatives towards sustainable development.

8. The Conference stressed that enhanced financing and technology transfer, as recommended by Agenda 21, would play a very important role in its implementation. It noted that overseas development assistance (ODA) had continued to decline over the years. Similarly, technology transfer as recommended by Agenda 21 had also not been adequately realized. The Conference urged that the developed countries honour their commitments to reach the established targets of 0.7 per cent of gross national product as ODA. It also urged that the developed countries take the necessary measures to enhance access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies for developing countries on concessional and favourable terms in line with Agenda 21. The Conference also agreed on the important complementary role to be played by private sector financing.

9. The Conference strongly felt that the 10-year review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992 (Rio+10) should be held in Asia. In that context, the Asian and Pacific countries strongly supported the offer of the Government of Indonesia to host the conference in Indonesia. It also noted with appreciation the offer of Cambodia to host the regional preparatory meeting for Rio+10.

10. The Conference requested ESCAP to assist the countries of the region by providing technical assistance in the implementation of the Regional Action Programme and national environmental strategies and action plans.

11. The Conference recommended that the countries of the region should participate actively in the Sixth Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and urged that financial assistance be provided to the developing countries to enable them to build capacity for climate change impact assessment and to create an enabling environment for private and public technology transfer.

12. The Conference adopted with minor amendment the ministerial declaration on environmentally sound and sustainable development (E/ESCAP/MCED(00)/1, annex I) as a vision for the twenty-first century. It also decided to review periodically the progress made in the implementation of the Declaration and the Regional Action Programme, and requested the Executive Secretary of ESCAP to submit to the Commission annual progress reports on their implementation.

13. The Conference adopted the Regional Action Programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development, 2001-2005 (E/ESCAP/MCED(00)/1, annex IV). It also recommended that appropriate steps should be undertaken to implement the Regional Action Programme to strengthen the capacity for sustainable development at the regional, subregional and national levels.

14. The Conference emphasized that regional cooperation was an essential prerequisite and specific subregional priorities in the Regional Action Programme needed to be better articulated and

more focused and targeted. In that connection, it recommended that enhanced efforts should be made to identify subregional and regional programmes of action.

15. The Conference also emphasized that the Regional Action Programme should be implemented effectively and in that regard both member countries and international organizations should take action. It was recommended that in order to monitor the sustainability process, sustainable development indicators should be identified and utilized at both national and regional levels. It was further recommended that an ad hoc committee should be established to monitor the implementation of the Regional Action Programme. Cooperation with other regions such as that covered by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in exchanging information could also be fruitful in the implementation endeavours.

16. The Conference adopted the Regional Message for the 10-Year Review of the Implementation of the Outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (E/ESCAP/MCED(00)/1, annex II).

17. The Conference also adopted the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment (E/ESCAP/MCED(00)/1, annex III). It stressed that through the implementation of the initiative, the environmental problems in the Asian and Pacific region could be mitigated and eventually overcome through the development of inter-city networks.

18. The Conference agreed that future conferences would benefit from the more active inclusion of major groups, both at the meeting itself and in the preparatory stages.

II. PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE

A. Perspectives on a new paradigm of sustainable development for Asia and the Pacific into the twenty-first century

(Item 4 of the agenda)

19. The Executive Secretary of ESCAP, in his policy statement, stressed that the environment and development challenges in the new millennium were formidable and highly complex. He stressed that several environment and development policy issues needed attention, namely, reversing the current patterns of the production, consumption and distribution towards a sustainable path; strategies to manage rural and urban environments to counter the negative socio-economic and environmental impacts; viable energy strategies and the use of clean-energy technologies that offered prosperity and a healthy environment; harnessing the process of globalization, including trade liberalization; enhanced foreign direct investment and financial flows to benefit all nations and all sectors of society; and correcting policy failures and institutional weakness through good governance and partnership with all stakeholders. The global community was at the threshold of ushering in a green, pro-growth environmental revolution and, by actively promoting and

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participating in such a revolution, the region could lay a foundation for a sustainable future. The Ministerial Conference was an important milestone towards that revolution.

20. The Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in his keynote address, recalled the recent Malmö Global Ministerial Environment Forum, which had reiterated global commitment to the goals for sustainable development, and the need for addressing the emerging environmental challenges, as well as enhancing partnerships with the private sector and civil society. He referred to the numerous challenges of the region, particularly the recent economic crisis in the region. The economic resurgence provided the opportunity to implement in the region environmental precautions, promote cleaner technologies and raise environmental awareness among the people, especially the youth and women. He discussed the priority environmental issues facing the region, as highlighted in the recent UNEP report, *Global Environment Outlook 2000*. He also highlighted the transboundary nature of environmental problems, and its potential for causing disputes, with specific reference to sea-level rise, glacial floods and transboundary haze. He then outlined some of the responses of UNEP through regional institutions and programmes, as well as its role in the Global Environment Facility (GEF). He made specific reference to the fundamental relationship between poverty and the environment, which was an immense challenge for the region. In conclusion, the Executive Director mentioned the numerous partnerships which UNEP had forged in the region. In particular, he referred to the partnership with ESCAP in the preparations leading up to the Ministerial Conference, and expressed optimism that that partnership would be further enhanced in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Regional Action Programme, 2001-2005.

21. The Conference noted the policy statements made by the ministers highlighting their major concerns, challenges and opportunities for environmental management and sustainable development.

22. The Conference showed deep concern about the deteriorating state of the environment in the region. Land degradation, loss of forests and of biodiversity, the spreading scarcity of fresh water, increase in solid wastes, and pollution of air, land and water had become even more serious. Forest fires and haze problems had intensified. The main causes were the rapidly rising population and the accompanying demands for increased economic output, growing urbanization, and rising poverty in a large number of developing countries in the region, unsustainable practices such as slash-and-burn practices by plantation owners and small farmers, illicit logging and uncontrolled development, to name just a few.

23. The Conference stressed that poverty, unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, and high population growth, coupled with inadequate financial resources and access to technology, were the major impediments to promoting sustainable development in the region. It

was therefore necessary to address those issues in order to achieve effective implementation of the Regional Action Programme and Agenda 21.

24. The Conference noted that since the Asian and Pacific region was home to 60 per cent of the world's population and considering the overall characteristics defining the region, as well as the recent trends of environmental deterioration, it was destined to play a decisive role in the achievement of global environmental protection. The Conference stressed that should the region fail to achieve its goal of environmental protection and sustainable development, the protection of the whole global environment would be in jeopardy.

25. The Conference noted that it was of the utmost importance that the Asian and Pacific region aim at creating a more equitable society in which the fruits of development would be shared by all members of the societies and nations. It therefore stressed that the region should take a lead role in striving to create a new model of development and implement the policies and measures needed to move towards that ideal system, including the "prosper thy neighbour" concept. The new model should also address current and future environmental conditions as well as rapid changes in social economic conditions accompanying the new developments in information technologies and in countering the negative impacts of globalization.

26. The Conference noted that a number of initiatives on environmental cooperation had been undertaken between and among countries and had brought positive results. It stressed that such initiatives should be further enhanced so that indigenous technical capacity could be built through the sharing of experience and expertise.

27. The Conference noted that the environmental challenges had to be met on four fronts: promoting rapid economic growth; reducing poverty and improving social empowerment; enhancement and efficient utilization of natural resources; and protecting and conserving the environmental endowment. It emphasized that poverty eradication should form the core of efforts towards the promotion of sustainable development. Significant assistance would be needed by the developing countries in their poverty alleviation programmes.

28. The Conference acknowledged the efforts made by the countries of the region to meet their commitments pledged in global conferences and conventions and the activities undertaken in response to emerging challenges of environmental degradation. A major response from the national authorities for environmental improvement had been the formulation and enforcement of legislation and strengthening of institutions, and regulatory measures, as well as the use of economic instruments.

29. The Conference appreciated the initiative taken by the countries and the ESCAP secretariat in making preparations for the Rio+10 review of Agenda 21. It also commended the efforts of the Government of Japan in organizing the Eighth Environment Congress for Asia and the Pacific

(ECO ASIA 2000) along with a number of associated events involving all relevant stakeholders. It also noted the establishment of a committee of eminent persons under the guidance of ECO ASIA.

30. The Conference noted that most developing countries of the region had undertaken activities to fulfil their commitments to international conventions such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. It advocated urgent support by international organizations and donors to assist them in further implementing those conventions.

31. The Conference also noted that achievements in slowing the pace of environmental degradation could not be made because of weak capacity and lack of financial resources and technological know-how. It noted that some developed countries had not honoured the commitments regarding financing and technology transfer made by them during the 1992 Conference. It emphasized that developed countries should honour their commitments to reach the agreed ODA targets and technology transfer obligations under Agenda 21.

32. The Conference emphasized that most countries in this region were challenged with the pressures of a weak economy, poverty, increased population and environmental degradation. Without adequate access to financial resources and environmentally sound technologies, the capacity of the countries of the region to implement the national Agenda 21 and the Regional Action Programme would remain severely limited. The developed and donor countries were therefore urged to assist and promote an external environment conducive to sustainable development.

33. The Conference recognized that the production and regeneration capacity of nature was limited and should be managed accordingly. Therefore, it was important to internalize the environmental damage to production costs. The effectiveness of pollution control strategies based on "polluter pays" and "user pays" principles should be increased.

34. The Conference stressed the need to identify issues of common priorities and actions. In that connection, coordination between countries and the promotion of regional and subregional cooperation were considered extremely important. Such cooperation would help address the environmental issues of a transboundary nature, promote exchange of information on experiences, know-how and expertise, and assist in technology transfer and capacity-building.

35. The Conference pointed out that the mechanisms for coordinated monitoring, data collection, processing and management in the region were still inadequate. In the period 2001-2005, high priority should be given to improving those mechanisms as well as the state of environmental information, to support decision-making and to improve the availability of reliable environmental information to the public.

36. The Conference noted that increasing sustainability was mainly dependent on innovation, through both fundamental research and the widespread dissemination and adoption of its results. Therefore, research and development activities and the dissemination of their results in the region should continue to be supported.

37. The Conference recognized that subregional cooperation had strengthened in the region. It took note of the initiative of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on the adoption of the ASEAN action plan on haze. The cooperation within the countries of Central Asia had been made on the basis of decisions taken at the level of heads of state. The International Aral Sea Rehabilitation Fund, the Interstate Sustainable Development Commission, and other bodies had been established with the aim of subregional cooperation. The Central Asia Regional Environmental Center has been established in Almaty, in order to strengthen the cooperation between the countries of the subregion, state bodies and the business sector, and public participation in decision-making.

38. The Conference reaffirmed the adherence to the principles for international cooperation on environment and development as identified in the Rio Declaration, such as the inseparability of environment and development, common but differentiated responsibilities and taking into account the special needs of developing countries.

39. The Conference noted the concerns of the small island developing states in respect of climate change and sea-level rise, waste management, the transport of nuclear and other radioactive materials, and international trade and sustainable development, and urged that international assistance be provided to those states to enable them to take the necessary measures for environmental protection and sustainable development. In that regard, it supported the initiative of those states to promote the utilization of renewable energy as a part of their sustainable energy development strategy. A request was made to donor communities, including the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank and GEF, to finance the renewable energy initiative of small island developing states.

40. The Conference agreed that a shift in the development paradigm was essential through the identification of internal capabilities in local technological know-how, particularly in new and renewable sources of energy, traditional conservation-based life styles and attitudes, and the sharing of experience. Simultaneously, the integration of efforts towards globalization would need to be continued along with countering the negative impacts of globalization.

41. The Conference advocated the use of strategic environmental planning for promoting the sustainability of the development process. In that regard, it recognized that the integration of environmental considerations into sectoral planning was imperative. The Conference considered that stakeholders should be involved in environmental economic decision-making and their

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participation should therefore be encouraged in the decision-making and implementation process. It was stressed that environmental policy should not be confined to the end-of-the-pipe process; rather policies and tools should address sustainable management of resources such as land, water and energy.

42. The Conference noted with appreciation that Kitakyushu was an ideal venue for the Ministerial Conference as it was a model of rejuvenation of the environment and as such carried a good lesson on enhancement of the environment.

43. The Conference felt that curative measures, such as recycling alone, were not enough for the enhancement of the environment. It was more important to introduce preventive measures such as low-waste or no-waste generation. Furthermore, it cautioned that although some short-term measures might appear highly beneficial, it was important to note that their long-term environmental impacts might be quite serious. It was therefore prudent to apply precautionary principles in such cases. The Conference noted that the use of instruments such as environmental impact assessment (EIA) and environmental risk management were extremely important to make sure that projects and activities were environmentally sustainable.

44. The Conference noted the statements made by United Nations organizations to promote sustainable development and environmental protection since the previous Ministerial Conference. The activities of the Secretariat for the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal were noted. The Conference noted the progress made in the ratification of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification as well as various initiatives of the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund and the World Health Organization in the promotion of environmentally sound and sustainable development in the region.

45. The Conference noted the priorities currently followed by ADB, the contribution of the Asian Productivity Organization in introducing environmental issues into production activities and Vision 2020 set up by ASEAN. It noted the publication of *Ramsar Toolkit* and its dissemination of the Convention on Wetlands in the region. The Conference noted the statement made by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources on the lack of commitment by governments to ratify the Kyoto Protocol by 2002. The strengthening of regional cooperation on environmental issues by the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme and the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme was also noted. The Conference was informed of the various activities of the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies. The representative of the Earth Council mentioned the need for the close involvement of stakeholders in the Rio+10 preparatory process.

46. The NGO Symposium on Developing Partnership Strategies for Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction, held as an associated event of the Ministerial Conference, expressed its firm commitment to the goals of the Regional Action Programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development, 2001-2005. It also affirmed its commitment to a dynamic, equitable, transparent and effective partnership with other stakeholders in achieving the goals of the Programme. It urged the ESCAP secretariat to strengthen cooperation with civil society in implementing the Programme. The Symposium recommended that the governments should institutionalize the partnership of the NGOs, including the establishment and strengthening of multi-stakeholder mechanisms, and should recognize the role played by the judiciary in the conservation of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development. It urged ESCAP and ADB to provide further assistance in cooperation with civil society to develop and learn about multi-stakeholder partnership and participatory approaches and strategies through workshops and seminars. It further recommended that women should be at the centre of efforts towards achieving the intended goals. The Conference endorsed the recommendations put forward by the NGO Symposium, and commended ESCAP on its pioneering and continuing efforts in engaging the NGOs and other segments of civil society in promoting sustainable development in the region.

47. The Media Symposium on the Role of the Media in Achieving Sustainable Development had emphasized the need for free and improved access to environmental information to enable the media to achieve their paramount role of providing citizens with fuller awareness of the state of their environment. It called for governments to give greater recognition to the watchdog role of the media in establishing acceptable and transparent environmental governance. It expressed its firm commitment and determination to strive to work more closely with its partners in civil society to achieve the goals of the Regional Action Programme, 2001-2005. It urged the support of international donors and ESCAP for strengthening regional networks of the Asian Pacific Forum of Environmental Journalists and their professional skills through training and exchange programmes, and establishing a training institute for environmental journalists.

48. The representative of the Asia-Pacific Regional Youth Caucus informed the Conference of its work in increasing youth awareness and strengthening the network among youth to confront environmental challenges. The Conference took note of the Singapore Declaration and the Regional Action Plan for Youth, developed in 1999, to affirm the commitment of youth to act on pressing environmental issues. The representative of the Youth Caucus appealed to the Conference to give support to young people by promoting environmental education, capacity-building, funding through links to government and the private sector, and by giving recognition to youth ideas through the establishment of a consultative process. The representative of the Youth Caucus called upon the Ministers to uphold their environmental responsibilities. Finally, he requested the Conference to reflect, in the Ministerial Declaration, its commitment to working with youth.

49. The Women's Conference on Environment in Asia and the Pacific pledged to achieve gender equality and to incorporate gender perspectives in every effort to protect the environment and to promote human security through the increased participation of women in the decision-making process at all levels of society. It called for the governments to reconfirm the statement contained in chapter 24 of Agenda 21 and to renew their commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action, particularly section K, on women and the environment. The Women's Conference expressed concern about the lack of women's rights to land and the erosion of their rights to biodiversity. It advocated citizens' access to information on such advanced technologies as genetic engineering and its impact on the reproductive health of women. The Women's Conference valued the customary knowledge and skills of women to protect the environment and people's health. It encouraged people to build and strengthen international networks to achieve sustainable consumption and the recycling of resources. It expressed concern at the growing destitution of women, including trafficking of women and children, and emphasized that priority should be given to women in poverty. It stressed the need to collect gender-segregated data as an essential input for gender mainstreaming in environmental decision-making.

50. The Private Sector Symposium was organized on 31 August and 1 September 2000 to review the role of the private sector in meeting the intentions of the Regional Action Programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development, 2001-2005. The Symposium noted that the private sector played a significant role in creating a resource recycling society and would further its efforts to deal with environmental problems. It adopted conclusions, and 19 recommendations, which were categorized into three groups: action to be undertaken on a voluntary basis by the private sector; action proposed to national governments to support private sector initiatives; and joint action by the private sector and the public sector. The Symposium concluded that the private sector needed to further promote positive cooperation, including technical cooperation among themselves and with the public sector and civil society. At the same time, it was important that the public sector provide a framework in which businesses could engage in environmental protection activities and by which fair competitive conditions were maintained.

51. The Global 500 Asia Forum, an associate event of the Ministerial Conference, was organized on 2 September to share experience as well as to exchange knowledge and ideas between the Global 500 Laureates of Asia and the youth of the region. The Forum recommended that meetings such as the Forum should be held periodically, in order to enhance activities for protecting the global environment through international, inter-generational, and inter-organizational discussions. The Forum expected governments to pay attention to the quality and targets of environmental education as well as to make efforts to promote the transfer of technology.

B. Report of the Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials

(Item 5 of the agenda)

52. The Chairperson of the Preparatory Meeting of the Senior Officials, which had been held from 31 August to 2 September 2000, presented the report of the Meeting (E/ESCAP/MCED(00)/1), together with its annexes, which contained the following:

- (1) Draft Vision for the Twenty-first Century: Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2000 (annex I)
- (2) Draft Regional Message for the 10-year Review of the Implementation of the Outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (annex II)
- (3) Draft Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment (annex III)
- (4) Draft Regional Action Programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development, 2001-2005 (annex IV)

53. The Chairperson indicated that the report of the Preparatory Meeting of the Senior Officials also contained the conclusions and recommendations arising out of the deliberations.

54. The Conference expressed appreciation of the excellent work undertaken by the Senior Officials in making a careful review and comprehensive assessment of the documents, and adopted the report of the Preparatory Meeting.

C. Declaration, Regional Message, Regional Action Programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development, 2001-2005, and Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment

(Item 6 of the agenda)

55. The Conference deliberated on the draft Ministerial Declaration entitled "Vision for the Twenty-first century: Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2000", which had been carefully reviewed and endorsed by the Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials and submitted to the Conference. The Conference adopted the Ministerial Declaration with minor amendments.

56. The Conference considered the draft Regional Message for the 10-year Review of the Implementation of the Outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Noting that the Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials had reviewed and endorsed the Message for the consideration of the Ministers, the Conference adopted it as presented. It recommended that the Message, which described the special situation in the Asian and Pacific region, should be issued as a regional input to the Rio+10 review.

57. The Conference endorsed the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment. It noted that the modalities of operation of the Kitakyushu Initiative Network, the identification of targets and periodic review of its achievements, as well as provisional follow-up projects, would be discussed by the first meeting of the Network; it was proposed that the meeting be organized by ESCAP in cooperation with the City of Kitakyushu and relevant organizations.

58. The Conference considered and adopted the Regional Action Programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development, 2001-2005, as finalized by the Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials.

III. ORGANIZATION OF THE CONFERENCE

A. Opening, duration and organization of the Conference

59. The Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2000 was held in Kitakyushu, Japan on 4 and 5 September 2000.

60. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, in his message to the Conference, expressed concern over the state of the environment in Asia and the Pacific. He noted the alarming statistics related to soil degradation and air and water quality, and the pressures placed on the environment by increasing poverty and rapid population growth. In spite of those disquieting statistics, there was reason for optimism through maximizing the benefits of information technology and globalization. Governments alone could not carry the burden of sustainable development. In that connection, he encouraged the involvement of the various stakeholders to develop new strategies for the environment and to discuss ways of integrating environmental considerations into the decision-making process.

61. In his opening message, the Executive Secretary of ESCAP expressed gratitude to the Government of Japan for hosting the event and for having provided generous financial assistance in the preparatory process. He thanked the local governments of Fukuoka Prefecture and the City of Kitakyushu for their hospitality and hard work in organizing the Conference. He expressed appreciation to ADB and UNEP for their close collaboration. He also expressed satisfaction with the strong networks of subregional cooperation. Finally, the Executive Secretary expressed gratitude for the continued support of the donor community.

62. The Governor of Fukuoka Prefecture, Mr Wataru Aso, delivered the welcome speech, stating that the Ministerial Conference was timely as the challenges of environmentally sound development were becoming more urgent than ever in that most dynamically growing region of the world. The hosting of the Conference by Fukuoka Prefecture demonstrated its determination to contribute to the environmental conservation efforts in the countries of Asia and the Pacific by, inter alia, promoting environmental education and training opportunities, enforcing the technology base and systems to support a resource recycling society; enhancing cooperation among industry, academics and local

administrations for information exchange and dissemination and technical cooperation; and cooperation with international organizations, such as hosting the Regional Office of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements.

63. The Mayor of Kitakyushu, Mr Koichi Sueyoshi, also delivered a welcome speech, expressing admiration of the progress made by the Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials and the prospects for the expected outcome of the Ministerial Conference, such as the Regional Message for Rio +10 and the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment. He commended the fact that the birth of those important documents would take place in Kitakyushu, which had once been a very polluted city. The city would continue its activities to support environmental conservation efforts in Asia and the Pacific to assist in the implementation of the Kitakyushu Initiative. The Conference was also informed of the messages received from Mr Maurice Strong, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General, and the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives conveying congratulations on the organization of the Ministerial Conference in Kitakyushu, which were distributed together with a message from the citizens of Kitakyushu.

64. The President of the Asian Development Bank, Mr Tadao Chino, in his opening statement, expressed satisfaction with the organization of the Ministerial Conference, which ADB and ESCAP had co-sponsored and which had been hosted by the Government of Japan. He recalled the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development which had put human beings at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. However, despite the significant progress made in the region during the past three decades, the region was afflicted by unacceptable levels of deprivation, illiteracy, child malnutrition, gender disparity and environmental degradation. ADB had made poverty alleviation its overarching objective. Poverty was both a cause and a consequence of environmental degradation. Since natural environment was of crucial importance to the poor, the forthcoming environment policy of ADB would place increased emphasis on the environmental constraints which inhibited poverty reduction.

65. The Executive Director of UNEP, in his opening statement, referred to the key role of the Asian and Pacific region in the context of the global future. The twenty-first century would be strongly influenced by the success of the people in building an economically vibrant and environmentally sustainable region. He referred to the numerous challenges of the region, as well as their solutions, such as the tolerance for diversity and a willingness to embrace social change. He expressed appreciation to the Government of Japan for hosting the Ministerial Conference, and for its continued assistance and partnership. The venue of the Conference itself, Kitakyushu City, provided a model for the region to emulate as living proof of the balancing of industrial growth and a clean environment. He reiterated the importance of regional and subregional partnerships, inclusive of the regional economic commission, the regional development bank and subregional environmental bodies

in the implementation of the Regional Action Programme. Finally, he offered the full commitment and support of UNEP for the follow-up of the Ministerial Conference.

66. The representative of the World Bank, speaking on behalf of the president of the World Bank, noted that while strong macroeconomic policy and growth were essential for development, they were not sufficient. The World Bank was in the midst of developing an environment strategy to reflect its broader mission, which was to reduce poverty. The strategy sought to identify those areas where the Bank could be most effective in using environmental interventions to reduce poverty, including decreasing environmental health impacts, such as air and water pollution, improving the livelihoods of the poor through sustainable natural resource use, and minimizing the vulnerability of people to natural disasters. The strategy would also focus on establishing a framework for sustainable economic growth led by the private sector, including a strong system of environmental safeguards, and would help countries address regional and global environmental problems.

67. The Conference was declared open by HE Ms Yoriko Kawaguchi, Minister of State, Director-General of the Environment Agency of Japan, who stressed the necessity of creating a new society which would address issues of poverty and the environment in a more active way. She emphasized the significance of the Conference as a valuable opportunity to chart a path for the future of the Asian and Pacific region and to promote the efforts at the national, subregional and regional levels to move along that path. In particular, she expected that the Kitakyushu Initiative would be endorsed by the Conference, as it represented not only a concrete measure which would lead to improvement of the urban environment but also a means of promoting regional cooperation.

B. Attendance

68. The Ministerial Conference was attended by the following members and associate members of ESCAP: Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; China; Fiji; France; India; Indonesia; Islamic Republic of Iran; Japan; Kazakhstan; Kiribati; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Maldives; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; Netherlands; Pakistan; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Samoa; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan; Thailand; Tonga; Turkey; Turkmenistan; Tuvalu; Uzbekistan; Vanuatu; Viet Nam; Cook Islands; and Macao, China.

69. The following United Nations bodies and specialized agencies were represented: Department of Economic and Social Affairs; United Nations Centre for Human Settlements; United Nations Centre for Regional Development; United Nations Children's Fund; United Nations Development Programme; United Nations Environment Programme; United Nations Population Fund; United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification; World Food Programme; United Nations University; International Labour Organization; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; World Health Organization; World Bank; World Meteorological Organization; International Atomic

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Energy Agency; and the Secretariat for the Basel Convention on the Control of the Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal.

70. The following intergovernmental organizations attended: ASEAN; Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research; Asian Development Bank; Asian Productivity Organization; Central Asia Regional Environmental Center; Convention on Wetlands; Global Environment Facility; South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme; and South Pacific Regional Environment Programme.

71. The representatives of the following non-governmental organizations, other entities, and Observers also attended: Asia-Europe Environmental Technology Centre; Earth Council; Institute for Global Environmental Strategies; International Alliance of Women; International Council on Social Welfare; International Planned Parenthood Federation; International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources; Japan Kyushu University; Japan Model United Nations; Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women; Kobe University; Kyushu University; Network "Earth Village"; Pacific Basin Consortium for Hazardous Waste Research and Management; Philippine Federation for Environmental Concern; Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University; Sophia University; Water Resources Investigation Office; and Women's Conference on Environment in Asia and the Pacific.

C. Election of officers

72. The Conference elected HE Ms Yoriko Kawaguchi (Japan) Chairperson, HE Mr H.N. Ashequr Rahman (Bangladesh), HE Mr Mareth Mok (Cambodia), HE Mr Zhu Guangyao (China), HE Mr Ratu Tu'uakitau Cokanauto (Fiji), HE Mr T.R. Baalu (India), HE Mr A. Sonny Keraf (Indonesia), HE Mr Serikbek Daukeyev (Kazakhstan), HE Mr Kakaotika Tekee (Kiribati), HE Mr Alykulov Tynybek (Kyrgyzstan), HE Mr Souli Nanthavong (Lao People's Democratic Republic), Dato Hieng-Ding Law (Malaysia), HE Mr Ulambayar Barsbold (Mongolia), HE Mr Shiva Raj Joshi (Nepal), HE Mr Jan Pronk (Netherlands), Hon. Herowa Agiwa (Papua New Guinea), HE Ms Myung Ja Kim (Republic of Korea), HE Mr Aleksey Filippovich Poryadin (Russian Federation), Hon. Matataualiitia Afa Lesa (Samoa), HE Mr Yock Suan Lee (Singapore), HE Mr Shokirov Usmonkul (Tajikistan), Hon. Tu'l'afitu (Tonga), HE Mr Fevzi Aytakin (Turkey), HE Mr Begench Atamuradov (Turkmenistan), Hon. Teleke Peleti Lauti (Tuvalu), Mr Sherimbetov Khalilulla Sertimovich (Uzbekistan), HE Mr Maxime Carlot Korman (Vanuatu), HE Mr Chu Tuan Nha (Viet Nam), HE Mr Norman George (Cook Islands) Vice-Chairpersons and HE Mr Yousef Hojjat (Islamic Republic of Iran) Rapporteur.

D. Agenda

73. The Conference adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the Conference.
2. Election of officers.

3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Perspectives on a new paradigm of sustainable development for Asia and the Pacific into the twenty-first century.
5. Report of the Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials.
6. Declaration, regional message, the Regional Action Programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development, 2001-2005, and the Kitakyushu initiative for a clean environment.
7. Other matters.
8. Adoption of the report.

E. Other matters

(Item 7 of the agenda)

74. The representative of Australia expressed the concern of that country about Japan's expanded whaling activities which were currently under way in the North Pacific, and recalled the International Whaling Commission meeting in July 2000 which, by resolution, called upon the Government of Japan to refrain from issuing permits for the whaling programme.

75. The representative of Japan stressed that the whaling issues should be discussed from the point of view of resource sustainability based on scientific data. Japan's purpose in research whaling was limited to collecting scientific data, for example, to learn about whales' consumption of fish, and its research whaling was being conducted in accordance with the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling.

76. The Conference expressed deep appreciation to the Government of Japan for hosting the Ministerial Conference. It also extended thanks to the Fukuoka Prefecture for its support and to the City of Kitakyushu for providing excellent host facilities and generous hospitality.

77. The Conference appreciated the support provided by the donor community in promoting sustainable development in the region and urged it to strengthen the efforts to achieve that goal.

78. The Conference expressed deep gratitude to different segments of civil society, including NGOs, the media, the private sector, women's groups, and youth organizations for their active role in achieving the objective of sustainable development in the region.

F. Adoption of the report

(Item 8 of the agenda)

79. The Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2000 adopted the report on 5 September 2000.