



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

**REPORT OF THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT
AND DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, 2005**

Seoul, 28-29 March 2005

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

1. The Conference agreed that rapid economic growth had exerted considerable pressure on the environmental sustainability of the region. The resultant environmental degradation could have an adverse effect on achieving the goal of sustainable development as envisaged in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. While economic growth was a prerequisite to reducing poverty, it was essential to address environmental protection and social development simultaneously.
2. The Conference agreed that long-term, effective poverty reduction that ensured improved quality of life would require that the natural environment be protected. Environmentally sustainable economic growth or Green Growth approaches were therefore necessary. Only through such approaches, which balanced the three pillars of sustainable development, could the region address priorities and commitments relating to poverty reduction, and to environmental sustainability, as expressed by the Millennium Development Goals.
3. The Conference expressed its strong support for Green Growth approaches, which would require policy and system changes to improve the environmental sustainability of production and consumption. However, it noted that the capacity of the region to effect such changes would need to be built, and requested ESCAP to continue its work to that end. National efforts would also require donor support. In that context, the Conference recalled Millennium Development Goal 8, committing Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) donors to an official development assistance (ODA) target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income.
4. The Conference noted the severity and consequences of the December 2004 tsunami and subsequent earth tremors and reiterated its sympathy and condolences to the affected countries. It also noted that the natural environment mitigated the impact of various types of natural disasters. In a context of increasingly frequent natural disasters and climate change, the protection of those natural barriers, along with national and regional integrated disaster preparedness and early warning systems, should be ensured to reduce loss of life and the impact on livelihoods.
5. The Conference agreed that the environmental problems of the region were of global significance and noted that participation in multilateral environmental agreements reflected the high levels of global stewardship in the region. It noted that the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities” was applicable to the global responsibility for improving the environmental sustainability of economic growth.
6. The Conference stressed that global environmental issues affected all countries. Small island developing States, however, were the most vulnerable in that regard. Their very existence was being threatened by global climate change resulting from current lifestyles and production patterns. The Conference urged swift action, in particular by developed countries, to safeguard the future of small island developing States, and reminded them of their responsibilities in that regard.

7. The Conference recognized the complex problems of the countries with economies in transition and the importance of subregional cooperation initiatives such as the Regional Environmental Action Plan for Central Asia for addressing environmental issues, including common and trans-border issues. It noted the need for assistance to those countries in their efforts towards sustainable development.

8. The Conference emphasized the interlinkages between nature, culture and human livelihoods in the Asian and Pacific region. It recalled that the philosophy of environmentally sustainable consumption and harmonious coexistence with nature existed in many of the cultural traditions of the region and should be protected and strengthened.

9. The Conference requested ESCAP to assist the countries of the region by providing technical assistance in the implementation of the Regional Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2006-2010 and national environmental strategies and action. It emphasized that regional and subregional cooperation would be required to identify and share appropriate and tested policy solutions and would complement the efforts of member countries.

10. The Conference noted that the private sector played an important role in ensuring environmental sustainability. It was stressed that policies supportive of the voluntary efforts of the private sector to improve the environmental sustainability of production patterns were a necessary component of Green Growth policy frameworks.

11. The Conference adopted the Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2005.

12. The Conference also adopted the Regional Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2006-2010. It recommended that appropriate steps be taken to implement the Plan to strengthen the capacity for environmentally sustainable economic growth at the regional, subregional and national levels.

13. The Conference also adopted the Seoul Initiative on Environmentally Sustainable Economic Growth (Green Growth).

14. The Conference recommended that progress in the implementation of the Regional Implementation Plan be reviewed periodically. It requested the Executive Secretary of ESCAP to submit progress reports to the Commission for its consideration and to present a final review report to the sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2010.

II. PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONFERENCE

A. Ministerial briefing on the recent tsunami and regional response strategy

15. A special briefing session on the December 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia was held at the outset of the Ministerial Segment. The session provided a wide range of perspectives linking efforts on disaster reduction and preparedness to sustainable development and sustainable economic growth. Against the background of the tragic loss of over 300,000 people and the severe socio-economic impacts of the tsunami, the session highlighted the importance of dealing with all natural disasters in that most disaster-prone region of the world. The different perspectives included discussion of the Hyogo Framework for Action, 2005-2015, adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in Kobe, Japan, in January 2005, to improve the resilience of countries and communities, experiences of the environmental impacts of the tsunami in the context of sustainable reconstruction and economic growth, coordination of rehabilitation and reconstruction assistance to the tsunami-affected countries, community-based disaster risk management for sustainable economic growth, and challenges in awareness-raising and public involvement.

16. The session noted the widespread support from the international community for the tsunami-affected countries in recovery and reconstruction as well as in enhancing disaster preparedness in the region for the better protection of people and sustainable economic growth. It called for the integration of good practices in disaster preparedness and disaster reduction, including indigenous practices, into the development process and emphasized the importance of rehabilitation and reconstruction and the development of the tsunami early warning system in the region. It noted with appreciation the establishment of the tsunami recovery fund by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), starting with an initial contribution of US\$ 600 million.

17. The session also called for coordinated efforts in the integration of disaster risk management into the formulation of policies and strategies on sustainable development and sustainable economic growth. It took note of the proposal of the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation to include as an additional Millennium Development Goal a target for the reduction of the loss of lives by water-related disasters (50 per cent by 2015).

B. Round table of major stakeholders

(Item 4 of the agenda)

18. The focus of the round table was the main theme of the Conference, "Achieving environmentally sustainable economic growth: Green Growth in the Asian and Pacific region". Eminent persons speaking at the round table included H.E. Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto, former Prime Minister of Japan and Chairman, Asia-Pacific Forum for Environment and Development, Mr. Mostafa Tolba, President, International Centre for Environment and Development, Mr. Haruhiko Kuroda, President, ADB, Mr. Kiyotaka Akasaka, Deputy Secretary-General, OECD, and Mr. Klaus Töpfer,

Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The round-table discussions were moderated by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP.

19. In his opening remarks, the Executive Secretary of ESCAP drew attention to the enormous pressure that economic growth in its current form was placing on the environmental carrying capacity of the region. He invited the panellists to focus their deliberations on two major issues: (a) how to improve the ecological efficiency of the economy; and (b) how to create a win-win synergy between the environment and the economy.

20. The panellists raised several important policy challenges in achieving environmentally sustainable economic growth. In particular, they emphasized the need (a) to understand the linkage between poverty and the environment, (b) to integrate the efforts of individual countries in mitigating the impact of natural disasters into a more systematic approach and to halve the human loss caused by water-related disasters by 2015, (c) to forge a new economic approach, which would internalize the cost of environmental damage, (d) to strengthen environmental laws and regulations, (e) to promote consumer education as an effective means to change existing consumption patterns, (f) to engage the private sector in environmental management and strengthen its role, (g) to make markets work by removing market distortions and inefficiency, such as environmentally harmful subsidies, and (h) to promote financial and technical assistance to developing countries.

21. The question of promoting the environment as an opportunity rather than a constraint was emphasized. It was suggested that environmental policies and regulations be integrated into development planning processes and that environmental impact assessment and environmental management plans for development in sensitive areas be strengthened to help to reduce the cost of mitigating environmental degradation.

C. Reporting from the side events

22. Representatives from a number of side events at the Conference, including the Civil Society Forum, the Eminent Scientists Symposium, the Eminent Environmental Economists Symposium, the Private Sector Forum, the Briefing on North-East Asia Regional Cooperation for the Prevention and Control of Dust and Sandstorms, the Multi-stakeholder Forum – APFED, the Japan Water Forum and the Asia-Pacific Women's Conference on Environment, reported on the outcomes of their respective events.

23. **Civil Society Forum.** The representatives of civil society from 14 countries in Asia and the Pacific met at the Forum, which was organized by the Civil Society Forum Korea Committee, Citizens Consumers Korea, the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea, and ESCAP. The representatives expressed deep concern about the current unsustainable production and consumption patterns prevailing in the majority of the countries in Asia and the Pacific, as the region had limited environmental carrying capacity and its rapid economic growth was placing increasing pressure on environmental sustainability. The Forum discussed the important role of civil society in sustainable development and called upon stakeholders to undertake a sectoral approach to increase the eco-

efficiency of consumption and production systems through action pursuant to 10 recommendations. The representatives urged Governments to work with civil society, with the full participation of affected communities, in realizing the recommendations.

24. **Eminent Scientists Symposium.** The Symposium, organized jointly by the Korea Environment Institute, ESCAP and the International Biosphere-Geosphere Programme and supported by six sponsors, was attended by over 70 scientists from 30 countries, mostly from the Asian and Pacific region. Following the presentations and a panel discussion on mainstreaming sciences into the environmental and developmental process, the participants arrived at a number of main conclusions, one of which was that policymakers needed simple, concise and clear information from scientists to assist them in making correct decisions. Thus, scientists needed more support for the acquisition of reliable data on which they based the information they provided to policymakers. The participants also considered that the market responded only to economic signals but not directly to social, environmental or cultural signals. Thus, it was necessary to encourage an evolving new economic paradigm based on the principles in which economic, environmental and social dimensions were considered together. Development must be environmentally sound and its benefits justly distributed. The participants also noted that the donor community, which was generous in disaster relief, also needed to contribute to disaster preparedness and reduction, including the establishment of monitoring and appropriate early warning systems.

25. **Eminent Environmental Economists Symposium.** Jointly organized by Kangwon National University, the Korean Association of Public Finance and Economics, and ESCAP, the one-day Symposium was held on 26 March with the theme, “Pursuing green growth in Asia and the Pacific”. Sixteen papers were presented at a gathering of more than 100 participants. Among the presenters were Mr. Akio Morishima, Chair, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, Japan, Ms. Tanja Srebotnjak, Project Director of Environmental Performance Measurement, Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy, United States of America, Mr. Jean-Philippe Barde, Head of the National Policies Division, OECD, and Ms. Olivia la O’ Castillo, President, Asia Pacific Round Table for Cleaner Production. The participants shared the view that the countries in Asia and the Pacific needed to pursue a new paradigm of Green Growth which meant pursuing economic growth while maintaining environmental sustainability. The participants also presented and discussed policy measures for the pursuit of a Green Growth approach. The participants agreed that environmental policies needed to be integrated with economic policies in order to create a win-win synergy between the environment and the economy. The participants also agreed that environmental policies needed to focus more on promoting the ecological efficiency of production and consumption patterns. In that regard, a more active role for civil society was emphasized.

26. **Private Sector Forum.** The Forum, with the theme “Corporate and public policies to promote Green Growth”, was organized by the Korea Business Council for Sustainable Development in association with ADB and ESCAP, and supported by the Ministry of Environment and the Federation of Korean Industries. The Forum provided an opportunity for the participants to discuss

the need for environmental management and corporate responsibility, case studies on environmental management and green business, and corporate responsibility for environmental management. Pro-poor public-private partnership was also presented as one of the models in providing basic services to the poor. The Forum agreed that there were numerous eco-efficiency opportunities that could simultaneously improve profitability and the environment and that those opportunities should be pursued vigorously. It put forward its recommendations to Governments to ensure that productive public-private partnerships resulted in improved environmental performance and the promotion of Green Growth.

27. **North-East Asia Regional Cooperation for the Prevention and Control of Dust and Sandstorms.**

A briefing session was organized on 25 March to present the findings and recommendations that had emerged from the ADB-Global Environment Facility regional technical assistance project for the prevention and control of dust and sandstorms. Those findings and recommendations had been documented in a three-volume master plan for regional cooperation. The main recommendations of the plan included the establishment of a regional monitoring and early warning network for dust and sandstorms in North-East Asia and the prevention and mitigation of dust and sandstorms through pilot demonstration projects in their source of origin. Representatives of the four agencies participating in the project, ADB, the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, UNEP and ESCAP, confirmed their readiness to participate in the implementation stage of the regional master plan to further promote regional cooperation in addressing the problem. The meeting noted that immediate coordinated action should be undertaken by the respective Governments and other national and regional stakeholders. It also called for support from the wider international community, the private sector and civil society in that regional endeavour.

28. **Multi-stakeholder Forum for an Equitable and Environmentally Sustainable Society – Message from APFED: A New Era for Sustainable Development and a Knowledge Network.**

The final report of the Asia-Pacific Forum for Environment and Development (APFED) was launched at the Multi-stakeholder Forum. Participants discussed future steps to put the APFED recommendations into practice, among which the importance of creating a knowledge-based network linking strategic research institutes was emphasized. In concluding the event, participants adopted the “APFED appeal to MCED2005”, which consolidated the crucial components of the APFED message and highlighted those recommendations with particular relevance to the theme of the Conference. APFED advocated a shift to a new approach in the way the economy, society and the environment, were viewed, in which the quality of life, human contentment and environmental sustainability, not material wealth, would be the prime concerns of all. APFED was firmly committed to continuing to function as a multi-stakeholder forum in which the knowledge and ideas essential for promoting sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific were actively discussed and exchanged.

29. **Water Forum.** Water and its efficient management were key ingredients in economic development and environmental sustainability. Following Goal 5, “Achieving environmentally sustainable economic growth”, a special session on water management for food and the environment

was organized by the Japan Water Forum with input from the International Water Management Institute and the Secretariat of the Fourth World Water Forum, Mexico. The Asian and Pacific region had demonstrated clear leadership in the World Water Forum area, with centuries of sustainable practices in which food production, environmental quality and economic growth were in harmony. The special session provided the opportunity to establish a clear process to prepare the first Asian and Pacific regional committee meeting, to be held in Manila during the week of 16 May 2005, leading to the Fourth World Water Forum in Mexico in March 2006. The Forum would provide a critical opportunity to support environmentally sustainable economic growth and poverty eradication in the region. The full participation of the Asian and Pacific region in the Fourth Forum would require adequate financial support. The session urged the Governments and international donors represented at the Conference to contribute generously to that end.

30. **Asia-Pacific Women's Conference on Environment.** The side event, organized by the Korean Women's Environmental Network, was held on 25 March 2005 with the aim of exploring women's role in sustainable consumption and alternatives for the environment-friendly economy. Recognizing the central roles of women in environmental management and sustainable development, the Conference facilitated the sharing of women's successful experiences on sustainable consumption and production, and identified concrete strategies for an alternative society model from a gender perspective.

D. Policy perspectives in the Asian and Pacific region

(Item 5 of the agenda)

31. The Executive Secretary of ESCAP highlighted key policy concerns for consideration by the Conference. He noted that rapid industrialization, intensification of agriculture, urbanization and increased consumption and changing consumption patterns were all associated with the rapid economic growth of the region and were exerting high levels of pressure on its environmental carrying capacity. That pressure resulted in depletion of natural capital to the point where future economic growth prospects and the ability to maintain human life prospects were in jeopardy. The impact of drought conditions was being exacerbated by seasonal water scarcity and degradation of watershed areas. Water quality was also declining owing to the intensification of industry and agriculture. Growing energy demand was still being met by using fossil fuels. All of those indicators were manifestations of rising pollution levels and contributions to climate change processes. The impact of natural disasters, such as the recent tsunami, was also being exacerbated by environmental degradation.

32. The Executive Secretary appreciated that Governments' efforts had resulted in significant progress being made in some areas, such as increased rates of forest plantation, slower loss of forest cover, reduced consumption of ozone-depleting substances and air quality improvements in several cities. However, those improvements in performance did not address the environmental pressure arising from economic growth. Environmentally sustainable economic growth, or Green Growth,

required policy shifts from the traditional approach and the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, economic development, social development and environmental protection. A range of policy approaches, tools and measures, including the use of economic instruments, the development of vibrant markets for environmental goods and services and the promotion of investment in environmental infrastructure, were available.

33. The Conference stressed the continued commitment of the region to internationally agreed sustainable development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. Acknowledging that the achievement of those goals was intimately linked with environmental protection, the Conference agreed that the environmental sustainability of economic growth was an urgent priority.

34. The Conference expressed solidarity with, and condolences to, the countries affected by the December 2004 tsunami, and noted that natural disasters and extreme weather events were becoming increasingly frequent.

35. The Conference expressed strong support for the theme of the Conference. Green Growth approaches were seen as timely and appropriate for the region. Many countries reported that while economic growth had been achieved at the expense of the natural environment, it had enabled social progress, as evidenced by decreasing child mortality rates, increasing life expectancy and rising literacy rates.

36. The Conference agreed that reducing poverty remained the most important policy priority for the developing countries of the region. In many countries the poor lived in areas of greatest environmental stress and their livelihoods were still, in rural areas in particular, strongly dependent on the use of natural resources. It was emphasized that Green Growth initiatives would not be successful unless they were unified with poverty reduction objectives; they should also employ community-based approaches.

37. The Conference noted that in countries in which consumption levels and patterns were becoming highly unsustainable, the adoption of the 3Rs (waste reduction, reuse and recycling) and other approaches to closing the waste cycle would be an important component of any Green Growth policy framework.

38. The Conference stressed that capacity-building was necessary to effect Green Growth approaches. Technical assistance, technology transfer and financing remained necessary to support the efforts of members and associate members of the Commission. The Conference noted that the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment was now benefiting 60 cities through the sharing of knowledge as a basis for improving urban environmental management policies. The achievements of the implementing partners were welcomed and strong support was expressed for its Action Plan for the future. The Seoul Initiative was welcomed by the Conference as a necessary capacity-building mechanism that held great potential as a catalyst for supporting the implementation of Green Growth approaches.

39. The Conference noted the new dimensions of and challenges to sustainable development, including SARS and avian flu and the impact of natural disasters.
40. The Conference agreed that the environmental problems of the region were of global significance and noted that participation in multilateral environmental agreements reflected the high levels of global stewardship in the region. It was emphasized that the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities” was applicable to the global responsibility for improving the environmental sustainability of economic growth. Developed countries should be reminded of their commitments to support developing countries, including Millennium Development Goal 8, which committed OECD/DAC donors to an ODA target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income.
41. The Conference stressed that urgent action was needed to address the global environmental issues which affected developing countries, and small island developing countries in particular. The very existence of those countries was being threatened by the lifestyles and production patterns and levels of developed countries, which should be strongly reminded of their responsibilities and their commitments in that regard. ESCAP was requested to play a role in facilitating communication with developed countries in that respect. The Conference noted the strong support shown for the Pacific subregional initiative of the Regional Implementation Plan.
42. The Conference noted with appreciation the efforts and measures undertaken towards achieving sustainable development by the countries with economies in transition. It recognized the complex problems that those countries were facing and the importance of subregional cooperation initiatives for addressing environmental problems. It noted the need for assistance to those countries in their efforts towards sustainable development, as well as the strong support for the proposed Central Asian subregional initiatives on land management, sustainable development and the Regional Environmental Action Plan as described in the Regional Implementation Plan.
43. The Conference agreed that the institutional frameworks required for effective environmental performance were being established in many countries. Institutional mechanisms for sustainable development, in response to the ideals and commitments expressed in Agenda 21, had been established, or were being established, in the region. The responsibility of government ministries for environment and sustainable development matters was being more clearly defined, and integrated with that of other ministries, where appropriate. The legislative and regulatory frameworks for improving environmental performance had largely been established and were responsible for improvements in environmental quality.
44. The Conference noted that greater attention to environmental sustainability was required. Only a few countries had established policy frameworks explicitly for improving the environmental sustainability of their economies and societies. Despite that situation, initiatives had been taken to improve environmental sustainability, and a few countries had set ambitious targets and deployed innovative policy tools to that end. Those included targets for carbon dioxide intensity, frameworks for measuring gross national happiness, green GDP, the application of concepts of zero-waste and re-

manufacturing, incentives for the use of renewable and alternative sources of energy and public-private partnerships for environmental infrastructure development. Some countries were also taking advantage of the Clean Development Mechanism as an innovative mechanism for financing technology transfer and promoting investment. The Conference recognized that those represented leading examples of policy innovation for the world, and for the rest of the region, which the countries concerned were willing to share.

45. The Conference noted the potential of economic instruments, observing that careful study of their use would be necessary to determine their applicability in the varying national policy and market environments.

46. The Conference noted that initiatives to explore the application of environmental indicators and measures, such as green GDP and gross national happiness, were evidence that Governments were beginning to realize the value of the natural environment. Such measures could also be used to measure progress towards sustainability and for measuring performance. That was seen as useful in highly decentralized government structures.

47. The Conference emphasized that regional and subregional cooperation would be required to identify and share appropriate and tested solutions, and would complement the efforts of member countries to jointly address shared environmental concerns, as well as manage shared environmental resources such as marine ecosystems. A network of national institutions responsible for sustainable development could serve as an effective mechanism for such cooperation.

48. The Conference noted that a few countries had made significant investment in environmentally friendly technology development and technology transfer, particularly with respect to technology related to water and energy use. It further noted that the private sector played an important role in ensuring environmental sustainability. It was stressed that policies supportive of the private sector's voluntary efforts to improve the environmental sustainability of production patterns were a necessary component of Green Growth policy frameworks.

49. The Conference also noted that partnership with other stakeholders was equally important and would contribute to increased access to investment and innovative financing, building public awareness and effectively managing natural resources. It noted the experience of parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention), of 1998, and the important role that that Convention had played in facilitating access to environmental information by stakeholders.

50. The Conference emphasized the interlinkages between nature, culture and human livelihoods in Asian and Pacific countries. It recalled that the philosophy of harmonious coexistence with nature was a part of many of the cultural traditions of the region and should be strengthened. Education for sustainable development provided a framework for facilitating the process of society-wide change to sustainable consumption and production. The Conference noted that the Education for Sustainable Development initiative of UNESCO was closely related to the recently commenced Decade of

Education for Sustainable Development, 2005-2014, which had been launched by the General Assembly.

E. Report of the Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials

(Item 6 of the agenda)

Consideration and adoption of the Ministerial Declaration, the Regional Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2006-2010, and the Seoul Initiative on Environmentally Sustainable Economic Growth (Green Growth)

(Item 7 of the agenda)

51. The Chairperson of the Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials, which had been held from 24 to 26 March 2005, presented the report of the Meeting (E/ESCAP/MCED(05)/1), together with its annexes: the Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2005 (annex I), the Regional Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2006-2010, (annex II) and the Seoul Initiative on Environmentally Sustainable Economic Growth (Green Growth) (annex III).

52. The Ministerial Declaration sets out the vision for achieving Green Growth in Asia and the Pacific and reinforces the commitments made by members and associate members of the Commission towards sustainable development. It provides various options and alternatives drawn from earlier multilateral agreements to encourage voluntary implementation. The Regional Implementation Plan charts the course of action to be undertaken by the region to realize the vision embodied in the Ministerial Declaration and strengthen capacity for environmentally sustainable economic growth in the region. The Seoul Initiative provides the region with a programme of immediate and concrete activities to further implement the areas of action envisaged in the Regional Implementation Plan.

53. 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.

54. The Conference adopted the Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2005, which had been carefully reviewed and endorsed by the Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials.

55. The Conference was informed by the representative of the Government of Turkey that Turkey was not a State Party to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982. Therefore, the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration should neither prejudice nor affect the position of Turkey concerning the Convention.

56. The Conference adopted the Regional Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2006-2010, which had been reviewed by the Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials.

57. The Conference endorsed the Seoul Initiative on Environmentally Sustainable Economic Growth (Green Growth). It noted that the first activity of the Seoul Initiative Network on Green Growth would be to further discuss the target and policy areas and agree on the strategies for implementing the Initiative.

III. ORGANIZATION OF THE CONFERENCE

A. Opening, duration and organization of the Conference

58. The fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2005, was held in Seoul on 28 and 29 March 2005.

59. In welcoming the participants to the Conference, the Minister of Environment of the Republic of Korea, H.E. Mr. Kwak Kyul-Ho, noted the importance of developing win-win strategies for both environment and development and for promoting the environment as a business opportunity. Over the last few days of the Conference, some of those challenges had been discussed at both the Senior Officials Meeting and in the side events of various stakeholder groups. The major challenges were to reduce poverty and protect the environment to ensure a bright future for the region. In that context, he urged the region to choose a path that supported both economic growth and the environment and met the needs of both future and current generations. The Minister expressed the hope that the Seoul Initiative on Environmentally Sustainable Economic Growth (Green Growth) would be adopted as an outcome of the Conference and looked forward to strengthened regional cooperation through that Initiative.

60. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, in a message to the Conference read out by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP, referred to the spectacular economic growth of the Asian and Pacific region. Despite rapid growth, two thirds of the world's poor lived in the region. Economic growth must therefore continue but the growth pattern should shift away from a "Grow first, clean up later" approach. He emphasized that poverty reduction and environmental sustainability were not mutually exclusive and must be pursued in tandem. Referring to the devastating impact of the tsunami disaster, the Secretary-General observed that such disasters, coupled with persistent poverty and rapid population growth, placed additional pressure on resources and ecosystems. He called for the fullest use of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and other global agreements. He offered to continue the efforts of the United Nations to integrate the concept of sustainable development fully into national development policies and planning and in turn usher in a new era of global responsibility, partnership and stewardship. Noting the achievements made in meeting the Millennium Development Goals in the region, the Secretary-General observed the useful lessons offered.

61. In his welcoming statement, the Executive Secretary of ESCAP expressed appreciation to the host country, the Republic of Korea, for its hospitality and the excellent preparations for the Conference. A record number of ministers were present, which demonstrated the commitment of the region to sustainable development. Environmentally sustainable economic growth, or Green Growth,

had been chosen as the focus of the Ministerial Conference in response to the pressure that fast economic growth was placing on environmental sustainability in the Asian and Pacific region and highlighted the importance of developing a strategy to shift towards Green Growth. The Executive Secretary underlined that the Conference, as a traditional forum for developing regional action programmes on environmental issues, had resulted previously in concrete outcomes such as the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment, emerging from the Ministerial Conference in 2000, which had resulted in a region-wide network of cities working towards successful and transferable practices in urban environmental management. The Executive Secretary expressed confidence that the current Conference would similarly result in action to address the gaps in and challenges to the promotion of sustainable development in the region. In that respect, he expressed his gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Korea for tabling and supporting the Seoul Initiative. He emphasized the importance of multi-stakeholder perspectives in the Conference and noted that the development and expression of those perspectives had been facilitated by the associated events of the Conference.

62. The President of the Republic of Korea, H.E. Mr. Roh Moo-Hyun, welcomed participants to the Conference and to his country. Noting the presence of representatives of several countries that had been hit by the 2004 tsunami, he offered his condolences and assured them of his country's continued support. He considered the Conference to be an important forum for the region that had put forward a timely and relevant theme for the region's deliberations. The region had achieved 4-6 per cent annual GDP growth in the previous several years, supported by its human resources, history and culture, and was leading the world economy. However, the region also shared common challenges, the most important being that of poverty eradication. The Republic of Korea had successfully met that challenge over the past 40 years but at the expense of the natural environment. Sustainable development initiatives had subsequently been undertaken and applied in the Republic of Korea. Stakeholder participation in those initiatives was high and was facilitated by increased access to environmental information. Public awareness had been improved, and the Government was working with the private sector to maximize the opportunities presented by environmental protection in business; it had also undertaken its own green procurement initiative. He expressed the hope that those experiences would be useful to other Governments and that the Conference would serve as a catalyst for regional cooperation, which his Government would continue to support.

63. The Executive Director of UNEP referred in his address to the Jeju Initiative, adopted at the meeting of the Governing Council of UNEP in 2004, as a milestone in affirming the role of ecosystems in meeting global development targets. The Jeju Initiative was also well placed to be integrated into the work of the Conference and linked with the Seoul Initiative. Noting that Green Growth was the biggest challenge facing the world, he stressed that the environment was not an end in itself but was critical to poverty reduction. He informed the Conference that the results of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Report, which would be delivered in a few days, would make it clear that healthy ecosystems were critical to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Efficiency with respect to the use of all resources, especially energy, was required, and such Green

Growth concepts were being applied in the region. Changing consumption and production patterns was a main element of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and required capacity development that would be addressed by the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building recently adopted by the Governing Council of UNEP. He noted that the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change marked 2005 as a year of opportunity.

64. The President of ADB, Mr. Haruhiko Kuroda, stated that the challenge to the region was to continue to grow, but to place growth on a development path that was environmentally sustainable. Given the size of the population and economy of the Asian and Pacific region, he noted that action on those issues would make or break future prospects for the environment, not only of the region but of the entire planet. He outlined the role of ADB as Asia's partner in development and its role and responsibility in achieving a prosperous, clean and green Asian and Pacific region. He also outlined ADB's comprehensive programme designed to support action at the local, national, regional and global levels to achieve environmentally sustainable economic growth in ADB member countries. He expressed dedication to the spirit of partnership with other organizations in the region and to maintaining ADB's role as a development financier and source of policy and technical advice.

65. The Minister of Commerce, Industry and Energy of the Republic of Korea, H.E. Mr. Hee-Beom Lee, welcomed the participants to his country. Referring to changing climate patterns, he noted that energy security, economic growth and environmental sustainability should be considered in tandem. He described the Republic of Korea's initiatives, particularly outlining efforts to reduce energy consumption, improve energy efficiency and use alternative energy sources, as well as apply the new concept of re-manufacturing. He emphasized that voluntary action through incentives, support to the private sector in using clean technologies, as well as international cooperation in the adoption and commercialization of technologies, was needed. In that respect, he felt that the Conference was significant because it brought ministers of both environment and development together. He expressed the hope that the Conference would serve as a forum for learning from the experiences of the Republic of Korea.

66. In his welcoming address, the Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau for Development Policy of UNDP stressed the importance of the two issues which UNDP considered to be at the core of achieving Green Growth: improving environmental governance and strengthening the interlinkages between environment and poverty. Noting the progress made and the challenges still facing the region for improving environmental governance, he emphasized the vital importance of stakeholders in the process. He outlined UNDP's Regional Environmental Governance Programme for Asia and the Pacific and other activities for improved environmental governance carried out by UNDP and partners in the region. He recalled the commitments made under Millennium Development Goals 1 and 7, and suggested that synergy in achieving those goals was essential. He noted that 2005 was a critical year for global decisions, with the high-level Millennium review to take place in September

2005, and he urged Governments to provide concrete support at the national level for the action plan emerging from the Conference.

B. Attendance

67. The Ministerial Conference was attended by the following members and associate members of ESCAP: Afghanistan; Armenia; Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; China; Fiji; France; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Kiribati; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Maldives; Marshall Islands; Micronesia (Federated States of); Mongolia; Myanmar; Nauru; Nepal; Netherlands; New Zealand; Pakistan; Palau; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Samoa; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Tonga; Turkey; Turkmenistan; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; Uzbekistan; Vanuatu; Viet Nam; Cook Islands; Guam; Macao, China; and Niue. A representative of Austria also attended.

68. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies and specialized agencies and related organizations also attended: Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Health Organization, World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Meteorological Organization.

69. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations also attended: Asian Development Bank, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, Asian Disaster Reduction Center, Asian and Pacific Coconut Community, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Colombo Plan Secretariat, European Union, International Centre for Environment and Development, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia, South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme, South Pacific Regional Environment Programme and World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

70. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations, other entities and observers also attended: International Alliance for Women, International Council of Women, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, Muslim World League, Citizens' Alliance for Consumer Protection of Korea, International Water Management Institute, Japan Water Forum, Kitakyushu Forum on Asian Women, Pacific Disaster Center and the Secretariat of the Fourth World Water Forum.

71. Observers were present from the Sida Humanitarian Office and Japan Offspring Fund.

C. Election of officers

72. The Conference elected H.E. Mr. Kwak Kyul-Ho (Republic of Korea) Chairperson, H.E. Mr. Mohammad Saifur Rahman (Bangladesh), H.E. Mr. Nado Rinchen (Bhutan), Pehin Dato Mr. Awang

Hj. Ahmad Haji Jumat (Brunei Darussalam), H.E. Mr. Mok Mareth (Cambodia), H.E. Mr. Pan Yue (China), Mr. Joji N. Banuve (Fiji), H.E. Mr. Namon Narain Meena (India), H.E. Ms. Kazuko Nose (Japan), Hon. Martin Puta Tofinga (Kiribati), H.E. Mr. Temirbek A. Akmatyaliyev (Kyrgyzstan), H.E. Mr. Bountiem Phissamay (Lao People's Democratic Republic), H.E. Dato Seri S. Samy Vellu (Malaysia), Hon. Abdullah Kamaludeen (Maldives), H.E. Mr. Ulambayar Barsbold (Mongolia), H.E. Mr. Fredrick W. Pitcher (Nauru), H.E. Mr. Tahir Iqbal (Pakistan), Hon. Tuisugaletaua A.S. Aveau (Samoa), H.E. Mr. Yaacob Ibrahim (Singapore), Hon. Abdul H.M. Fowzie (Sri Lanka), H.E. Mr. Abduvokhit Karimov (Tajikistan), Hon. Paul Barthélemy Telukluk (Vanuatu), Sir Geoffrey Henry (Cook Islands) and Hon. Toke T. Talagi (Niue) Vice-Chairpersons and Mr. W.R.M.S. Wickramasinghe (Sri Lanka), 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. Round table of major stakeholders.
 5. Policy perspectives in the Asian and Pacific region.
 6. Report of the Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials.
 7. Consideration and adoption of the Ministerial Declaration, the Regional Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2006-2010, and the Seoul Initiative on Environmentally Sustainable Economic Growth: “Green Growth”.
 8. Other matters.
 9. Adoption of the report.
 10. Closing of the Conference.

E. Other matters

(Item 8 of the agenda)

74. No other matters were raised under the agenda item.

F. Adoption of the report

(Item 9 of the agenda)

75. The fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2005, adopted its report on 29 March 2005.

ANNEXES

Annex I

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

PREAMBLE

We, the Ministers for environment and development 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 Development¹ and the provisions of Agenda 21,² the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development,³ in particular the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation,⁴ which incorporates the priority initiatives of the Phnom Penh Regional Platform on Sustainable Development for Asia and the Pacific,⁵ the Millennium Development Goals (2000), the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,⁶ the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the Programme of Action⁷ and the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building,⁸

Acknowledging that the lack of adequate finances and the necessary technologies and capacities is still the major obstacle preventing the developing countries from achieving sustainable development and internationally agreed development goals in the Asian and Pacific region, and that there is still an urgent need for the international community, especially donor countries, to honour their commitments and to provide financial, technical assistance and capacity-building to economies in transition and developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and the small island developing States in this region,

Noting in particular Millennium Development Goals one and seven, aimed respectively at reducing poverty and ensuring environmental sustainability, and Millennium Development Goal eight,

¹ *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.

² *Ibid.*, annex II.

³ 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.

⁴ *Ibid.*, resolution 2, annex.

⁵ E/CN.17/2002/PC.2/8.

⁶ *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.

⁷ Adopted at the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island States, held in Port Louis, Mauritius, from 10 to 14 January 2005.

⁸ Adopted at the High-level Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on an Intergovernmental Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building at its third session, held in Bali, Indonesia, on 4 December 2004.

committing Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee donors to an official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national income, and recognizing that these goals are mutually supportive and commonly linked with gender issues,

Also noting chapter 4 of Agenda 21 and chapter III of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, which emphasize the importance of changing consumption patterns, with developed countries to take the lead,

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 reducing poverty is the greatest challenge facing the Asian and Pacific region and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, particularly in the developing countries,

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

Recognizing further that increasing consumption and production resulting from unsustainable economic growth is placing increasing stress on the carrying capacity of Asia and the Pacific, as also elsewhere in the world,

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, there is a need to shift the development orientation from a “Grow first, clean up later” approach to one of Green Growth, as a way of communicating environmentally sustainable growth to the broader community,

Recognizing that Green Growth is understood in this context to mean sustainable development, as elaborated in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation,

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 environmentally sustainable economic growth, or 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, including in particular through new and additional financial resources, technology transfer and capacity-building, to address poverty and to contribute to

sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific by means of the framework of activities described below,

Make the following declaration providing various options and alternatives drawn from earlier multilateral agreements to encourage voluntary implementation, taking into account the diversity in the development needs and capabilities of countries.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND PERFORMANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

1. *We seek to improve* environmental sustainability while addressing poverty by reducing the pressure of unsustainable economic growth on the environment by:

(a) Incorporating environmental costs into market prices and using, wherever appropriate and feasible, economic instruments that are supportive of Green Growth;

(b) Enhancing cleaner production by promoting eco-efficiency through the wide use, wherever appropriate, of clean energy and natural resource-saving technologies and practices as well as renewable, alternative and low-polluting energy sources;

(c) Improving the environmental sustainability of consumption patterns by linking them, where appropriate, 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, droughts, cyclones and sandstorms, to minimize the risks to the lives, livelihoods and habitation of the population, in particular the poor; and developing suitable disaster preparedness and response mechanisms for the mitigation of such disasters, including sex-disaggregated data collection systems;

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

(g) Improving measures for protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development, particularly in oceans and coastal areas, which are critical for global food security;

(h) Promoting the 3Rs, that is, waste reduction, reuse and recycling of material and products in production and consumption, in order to minimize natural resource consumption as well as waste and pollutant generation.

2. *We shall endeavour* to improve environmental performance through mechanisms such as 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 implementation at the global and regional levels of multilateral environmental agreements to which we are party;

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

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

(e) Establishing or promoting institutional structures such as national sustainable development mechanisms for the purpose of integrating policies regarding the three pillars of sustainable development, and promoting effective multi-stakeholder partnerships with the participation of the private sector, civil society and all other major groups;

(f) Encouraging the sharing of experiences in the use of environmental sustainability and environmental performance indices used to assess conditions and trends as tools in the formulation of sustainable development policies;

(g) Encouraging the use of the ecosystem approach to strategic planning and management with regard to natural resources and the environment;

(h) Ensuring that policies supportive of environmentally sustainable economic growth are simultaneously supportive of the imperative of poverty reduction.

3. *We recognize* that the environment is not an obstacle to economic growth, but offers opportunities for sustainable growth, especially through encouraging strategies such as:

(a) Promoting markets for environmental technologies, products and services;

(b) Encouraging stakeholders to be engaged in environmental infrastructure investments and partnership development;

(c) Encouraging research, development and demonstration in environmental technology;

(d) Promoting 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;

(e) Fostering a communication strategy through ESCAP and members and associate members on the concept of Green Growth;

(f) Promoting capacity-building and technology transfer initiatives to encourage and facilitate environmental technologies for sustainable growth for countries with economies in transition

and developing countries, in particular for small island developing States and least developed countries in Asia and the Pacific.

ROLE OF MAJOR GROUPS

4. *We affirm* the Johannesburg Political Declaration, which recognizes that as social partners we will continue to work for stable partnerships with all major groups, respecting the independent important roles of each of them in promoting sustainable development, through discussions with major groups on the issues of:

(a) Encouraging the use of different economic instruments to achieve sustainable development;

(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 as complementary instruments for sustainable development;

(d) Encouraging civil society to play an important role in 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, wherever appropriate, 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 IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, 2006-2010

5. *We resolve* to continue the efforts to implement the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, mindful of 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 along with the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment,⁹ the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the Programme of Action, acknowledging in this connection the positive steps taken by members and associate members of the Commission, including important work at the regional and subregional levels towards the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and its priority initiatives.

6. *We recognize* the Regional Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2006-2010, as a useful framework for action keeping in mind national priorities and goals.

7. *We welcome* the Seoul Initiative on Environmentally Sustainable Economic Growth (Green Growth), which addresses the emerging challenges highlighted in the Regional Implementation Plan with the goal of environmentally sustainable economic growth in Asia and the Pacific.

8. *We support* the regional and subregional initiatives listed at the end of 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.

9. *We also 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 in the integration of environment and economy and are themselves integrated into the national economic planning and implementation process.

11. *We also urge* the members and associate members of the Commission to ensure that the environmental concerns of poor and vulnerable groups, especially women and children, are integrated into national planning and policy frameworks for poverty reduction.

⁹ 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.

12. *We request* the members and associate members of the Commission to strengthen existing subregional sustainable development mechanisms.
13. *We emphasize* the importance of international cooperation on bilateral and multilateral bases in achieving sustainable development.
14. *We remind* the international community, particularly the developed countries, of the commitments to the principles of “common but differentiated responsibilities” in the efforts to achieve sustainable development.
15. *We urge* the 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 in Asia and the Pacific, 2006-2010, and its initiatives and projects.
16. *We agree* that a periodic review should be conducted to track progress made in the implementation of the Regional Implementation Plan and, in this context, request the Executive Secretary of the Commission to submit progress reports to the Commission for its consideration, based on information provided by members and associate members on a voluntary basis, and a final review report to the sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development.
17. *We also agree* to convene the sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific by the year 2010.
18. *We express* our sincere appreciation to our gracious host, the Government of the Republic of Korea, for its generous support, hospitality and excellent arrangements for the Conference.

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

Initiative		Main partners identified to date	Likely funding sources
Regional initiatives			
Seoul Initiative on Environmentally Sustainable Economic Growth (Green Growth)		ESCAP	Republic of Korea
Environment as a business opportunity in the sustainable economic growth of the Asian and Pacific region		Asian Development Bank (ADB), ESCAP	ADB
Integrating disaster risk management and preparedness into socio-economic development policies and planning		ESCAP lead role	Republic of Korea
Poverty and environment		United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), ADB	UNDP, ADB
Subregional initiatives			
Central Asia	Central Asian countries initiative on a land management programme for combating land degradation	ADB lead role with multiple partners	Global Environment Facility (GEF), ADB, other donors/national funding
	Central Asia Initiative on Sustainable Development and Regional Environmental Action Plan	Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development in Central Asia, Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia	GEF, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), European Union, national financial mechanisms
North-East Asia	Dust and sandstorm prevention and mitigation (phase II)	ADB lead role, UNEP, ESCAP, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification	GEF, ADB, participating Governments
	Mitigation of climate change (innovative technologies and transport sector development)*	ESCAP	Funding required
	A Framework for Nature Conservation Programme for North-East Asia	North-East Asian Subregional Programme of Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC), ESCAP	Core Fund of NEASPEC
South-East Asia	Education for sustainable development with a focus on sustainable consumption and production*	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, ESCAP, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Consumer Association of the Republic of Korea	Funding required
South Asia	Land degradation*	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Funding required
Pacific	Sustainable community lifestyles in Pacific island countries (focus areas: adaptation to climate change, ecotourism, natural resource management)*	South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, ESCAP	Funding required

* Initiative to be developed.

Annex II

REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, 2006-2010

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background and rationale

1. The fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, was held in Seoul on 28 and 29 March 2005. The Conference adopted the Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2005, which renews the commitment of the region to internationally and regionally agreed programmes for sustainable development by focusing on environmentally sustainable economic growth. This Regional Implementation Plan on Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2006-2010, is guided by the Ministerial Declaration, and presents options for action, taking into account the diversity in the development needs and capabilities of countries.

2. The critical importance of promoting sustainable development is underlined by the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the provisions of Agenda 21, the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in particular the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, which incorporates the priority initiatives of the Phnom Penh Regional Platform on Sustainable Development for Asia and the Pacific, the Millennium Development Goals, the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the Programme of Action, and the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building. The current review of development in the region, however, reveals that, despite the considerable efforts of Governments, the concept of sustainable development has not been fully operationalized.

3. Although economic output varies across the Asian and Pacific region, it has increased sharply in the region as a whole during the last two decades, outpacing every other region of the world. However, the pressure exerted by economic growth on the environmental carrying capacity of members and associate members is now becoming a most serious challenge to the environmental sustainability of the region. Nevertheless, economic growth is necessary for the region to eradicate poverty and move towards achieving internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals; while Goal 1 commits members and associate members to reduce poverty, Goal 7 requires that environmental sustainability be ensured. Thus, in order to harmonize the two goals, the pursuit of environmentally sustainable economic growth is an imperative for the region.

4. It is important to explore appropriate alternative paths in order to avoid repeating the mistakes inherent in the conventional unsustainable growth pattern of the “Grow first, clean up later” approach. The sustainable future of the region requires synergy between environmental and economic policies, and appropriate and effective institutional mechanisms to support the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development: economic development, social development and environmental protection.

5. The primary focus of the Regional Implementation Plan is therefore to provide a guiding framework for promoting environmentally sustainable economic growth, or Green Growth. In Green Growth approaches to economic development, economic growth does not place undue pressure on environmental sustainability and environmental protection is recognized as an opportunity for sustainable economic growth rather than a constraint or burden. The adoption of Green Growth approaches will create a win-win situation in which protection of the environment contributes to economic development. At the same time, maintaining the integrity of ecosystems plays an important role in mitigating the impact of natural disasters. Strengthening environmental protection and integrating disaster risk management and preparedness into socio-economic policies and planning are vitally important to minimize the risks to lives and livelihoods, in particular for vulnerable groups. Regional and subregional cooperation, as well as shared commitment among Governments and other stakeholders, are also indispensable in promoting sustainable development in the region.

6. It is in the above context that the Regional Implementation Plan has been drawn up to provide a guiding framework for action to bolster the efforts to achieve environmentally sustainable economic growth as an essential component of sustainable development. The Plan is clustered around four main programme areas: (a) improving environmental sustainability; (b) enhancing environmental performance; (c) promoting environmental protection as an opportunity for sustainable growth; and (d) integrating disaster risk management and preparedness into socio-economic development policies and planning. Each programme area of the Plan has an objective, action areas and activities.

7. The time frame of the Plan would be 2006-2010 and its implementation modalities include stakeholder participation, regional, multilateral and bilateral cooperation, technology transfer, financing, and follow-up and review mechanisms. As part of the effort to implement the Plan, a number of regional and subregional initiatives, some of which have been endorsed by the respective subregional and regional preparatory meetings for the fifth Ministerial Conference, are identified. ESCAP, UNEP, UNDP, ADB and other international, regional and subregional organizations are called upon to collaborate in assisting members and associate members in the implementation of the Plan and its associated initiatives.

B. Objectives of the Regional Implementation Plan

8. There is a comprehensive package of programmes for achieving sustainable development, including (a) the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Water and Sanitation, Energy, Health, Agriculture and Biodiversity initiative and the Phnom Penh Regional Platform on Sustainable Development for Asia and the Pacific, (b) the Regional Action Programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development, 2001-2005, (c) the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment, (d) the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the Programme of Action. Considering that environmentally sustainable economic growth is an essential component

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of sustainable development, the main goal of the Plan is to further assist the implementation of existing programmes and commitments by promoting regional and national capacity for achieving environmentally sustainable growth. To this end, the Plan identifies objectives in four programme areas.

II. BASIS FOR ACTION

A. Assessment of key achievements and challenges in the further implementation of the sustainable development agenda

9. Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was held in 1992, awareness of the importance of environmental issues has generally increased and global stewardship has improved. The Governments of Asian and Pacific countries are well represented among the parties to multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), although full implementation remains a challenge.

10. The review and analysis of progress towards achieving sustainable development in the region as a whole have revealed that countries in Asia and the Pacific are genuinely striving to achieve sustainable development goals and are committed to eradicating poverty and improving the social well-being of their growing populations by establishing the institutional and policy mechanisms necessary for sustainable development. However, the progress has not been even in all countries owing to different levels of development and capacities. The challenges are too great to overcome within a short period of time and with limited resources.

11. As already stated, economic growth is essential for sustainable development. Sustainable development stipulates the sustainable use of natural resources and the integrity of ecosystems. It requires that consumption and production patterns be maintained within the regeneration capacity of the environment. There is a strong need to improve ecological efficiency.

12. Environmental pressure is created not only by production but also by unsustainable consumption patterns. Therefore, there is a need to address those patterns as a part of the strategy in environmental governance. There is also a need for further decentralization of environmental governance, which has enabled and empowered local communities to develop and implement successful environmentally sustainable practices wherever it has been applied. A strengthened civil society as an active player can play an important role in changing existing consumption patterns.

13. Regional, subregional and bilateral cooperation has proved to be effective for articulating sustainable development issues and for capacity-building, in particular through exchanging best practices and the sharing of experiences and relevant information.

B. Current status of environmental performance and sustainability in Asia and the Pacific

14. Environmental and other indicators provide clear evidence that the pressures on environmental sustainability have increased substantially owing to rapid economic growth in the region.

15. Some of the major threats to sustainable development in the region are extreme poverty, unsustainable consumption and production patterns, rapid urbanization, increasing wastes, growing demand for energy, water and natural resources and pressure on ecosystems.

16. While environmental sustainability is a measure of the total pressure that a society places on its own environmental carrying capacity, environmental performance is a measure of the efficiency of environmental governance, i.e., the effectiveness of an administration in reducing environmental pollution and protecting natural resources. Some developed countries often exhibit low environmental sustainability in spite of relatively fair environmental performance. The efforts of members and associate members to improve their environmental performance have resulted in progress in some areas. For example, air quality declines have been reversed or slowed in some cities, the rate of deforestation has slowed in some countries and institutional and legislative frameworks for environmental protection have been established or strengthened.

17. There appears to be a focus on environmental performance rather than on environmental sustainability, although it is clear that Millennium Development Goal 7, "Ensuring environmental sustainability" (sustainability defined broadly), requires both. In devising a more practical and realistic response strategy for improving the state of the environment, both environmental performance and environmental sustainability are to be given equal attention to ensure long-term prospects for developing synergy between the environment and economic development.

18. There are significant opportunities for promoting the integration of environmental protection and economic development. Globalization, while directly linked to increasing environmental pressure in the region, also brings growing consumer awareness, access to information and communication technologies and services, increased capacity of civil society organizations, technological advances and improved private sector development and investment environments.

III. PROGRAMME AREAS

A. Improving environmental sustainability

19. As noted above, the rapid economic growth of the region has placed increasing pressure on environmental sustainability. It is therefore important to improve environmental sustainability by reducing the pressure on environmental carrying capacity. Policy measures should encourage environmental sustainability by promoting changes in consumption and production patterns and harmonizing economic development with the protection and management of the environment. Some possible actions are suggested below.

1. Objective

20. The main objective of the programme area is to strengthen national capacities to improve environmental sustainability.

2. Action areas

21. Action areas for improving environmental sustainability may include identifying and promoting the policy measures and changes in concepts and systems necessary to:

(a) Incorporate the concept of ecological efficiency and environmental sustainability into economic and social development planning, since ecological efficiency is critical in ensuring environmental sustainability;

(b) Assess the environmental pressure being placed upon limited ecological carrying capacity and improve resource-use efficiency;

(c) Enhance the ecological efficiency of economic growth and reduce the environmental pressure arising from economic growth;

(d) Promote sustainable production and consumption patterns by changing the way society produces and consumes, as called for in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, possibly by linking them with traditional lifestyles and cultural values;

(e) Internalize environmental costs into price structures by employing various economic instruments such as green GDP and eco-tax reform to promote resource-use efficiency;

(f) Promote demand-side management to improve the ecological efficiency in the way society produces and consumes natural resources such as water, energy and raw materials;

(g) Promote capacity-building and awareness of Governments, the private sector and civil society concerning the need to improve ecological efficiency;

(h) Promote partnership among various stakeholders in society to improve ecological efficiency, environmental sustainability and awareness of the respective roles that they can potentially play;

(i) Promote the 3Rs, i.e., waste reduction, reuse and recycling of material and products in production and consumption, in order to minimize natural resource consumption as well as waste and pollutant generation.

3. Activities

National

22. Activities for improving environmental sustainability at the national level may include the following:

(a) Developing institutional capacity to effectively promote policies to improve environmental sustainability;

(b) Analysing trends in environmental sustainability and identifying key challenges and policy options, including effective combinations of economic, regulatory and voluntary approaches to sustainable development;

(c) Promoting the use of economic instruments in formulating and implementing macroeconomic and microeconomic policies;

(d) Implementing effective policies and strategies for poverty reduction and promoting equitable access by all, in particular the poor, to natural assets;

(e) Addressing the need for sustainable energy development through measures such as integrating energy considerations into socio-economic programmes to encourage the use of renewable energy technologies and efficient use of energy as well as increase access to energy services;

(f) Adopting and implementing policies and measures aimed at fostering sustainable patterns of production and consumption, in particular through institutional capacity-building;

(g) Formulating national action programmes to promote interlinkages in the implementation of MEAs in the context of environmental sustainability and environmentally sustainable economic growth;

(h) Promoting integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans to achieve Millennium Development Goal 7, as it relates to access to safe drinking water;

(i) Promoting integrated, multidisciplinary and multisectoral ecosystem management, including coastal and ocean management;

(j) Accelerating the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the Mauritius Strategy for the further implementation of the Programme of Action;

(k) Undertaking initiatives to address air pollution, transboundary environmental problems and sandstorms;

(l) Working collaboratively under the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment to improve air and water quality and waste management.

Regional and subregional

23. Activities for improving environmental sustainability at the regional and subregional levels may include the following:

(a) Analysing regional trends in environmental sustainability and identifying regional strategy and policy options according to the various levels of development of members and associate members;

(b) Coordinating effectively the efforts of the various United Nations bodies, agencies and programmes, international and intergovernmental bodies and other entities assisting in the implementation of the policies so identified;

(c) Strengthening regional and subregional programmes to improve the synergy between these programmes, the Plan and relevant national plans;

(d) Strengthening and facilitating, as appropriate, regional and subregional cooperation and networking aimed at exchanging information and knowledge and effecting technology transfer;

(e) Building or strengthening institutional capacity and developing human resources programmes through regional, subregional and national workshops on internalization of environmental costs and the use of economic instruments;

(f) Undertaking an assessment of the application of methodologies and the development of guidelines for the application of natural resources accounting;

(g) Mobilizing technical and financial support through donor coordination, technology transfer, the promotion of good practices and support for capacity-building in members and associate members, particularly least developed and landlocked countries, economies in transition and small island developing States, to implement the Plan;

(h) Collecting and disseminating information on cost-effective examples of cleaner production, eco-efficiency, use of economic instruments and sustainable consumption, and promoting the exchange of information on successful practices among the countries of the region;

(i) Assisting members and associate members in the periodic assessment and review of their progress with regard to the Plan.

B. Enhancing environmental performance

24. Although the region has made considerable progress in establishing institutional mechanisms for environmental protection and in enacting appropriate legislation for pollution control and natural resource management, further improvement is necessary. The current impediments include weak institutional and legal frameworks, particularly enforcement mechanisms, overlapping of functional responsibilities and lack of coordination and policy integration. At the same time, there is a need for enhanced participatory planning and management through the involvement of stakeholders. Actions suggested under this programme area may address relevant issues.

1. Objective

25. The main objective of the programme area is to strengthen national capacities for enhanced environmental performance.

2. Action areas

26. Action areas for enhancing environmental performance may include the following:

- (a) Promoting effective enforcement of and compliance with laws, regulations and standards relating to sustainable development;
- (b) Improving institutional structures for policy integration and promoting the participation of the private sector, civil society and all other major groups in the efforts to achieve sustainable development;
- (c) Developing and using environmental performance indices for the assessment of conditions and trends as essential tools in the formulation of sustainable development policy.

3. Activities

National

27. Activities for enhancing environmental performance at the national level may include the following:

- (a) Reviewing national laws, regulations and standards periodically, and incorporating effective incentives, remedies and penalties;
- (b) Enhancing institutional capacity for collecting compliance data, regularly reviewing compliance, detecting violations, establishing enforcement priorities and conducting periodic evaluations of the effectiveness of compliance and enforcement programmes;
- (c) Developing integrated strategies and mechanisms to maximize compliance;

- (d) Strengthening judicial and administrative procedures for legal redress and remedy of actions affecting environment and sustainable development;
- (e) Supporting efforts to comply with MEA obligations;
- (f) Developing and using environmental performance indices for the formulation of sustainable development policies;
- (g) Strengthening institutional structures such as national sustainable development mechanisms in order to provide a high-level focus on sustainable development and encourage the development of multistakeholder partnerships;
- (h) Encouraging the private sector and industry to improve their environmental performance through voluntary initiatives, including environmental management systems, environmental audits, codes of conduct and public reporting;
- (i) Promoting the application of environmentally sound technology;
- (j) Promoting public awareness and participation through better access to information regarding legislation, regulations, activities and programmes geared to improving environmental performance by all stakeholders;
- (k) Promoting research and development on methods of improving environmental performance.

Regional and subregional

28. Activities for enhancing environmental performance at the regional and subregional levels may include the following:

- (a) Providing technical assistance to strengthen national policies and legal frameworks for sustainable development governance;
- (b) Supporting capacity-building initiatives to strengthen the ability of decision makers and legal administrators (i.e., the judiciary, lawyers, administrative officials, legislative drafters) to develop, implement and enforce laws consistent with sustainable development principles;
- (c) Facilitating the implementation of MEAs by building or strengthening the capacity of national institutions;
- (d) Supporting the development and adaptation of environmental performance indices suited to local conditions;
- (e) Establishing clearing houses for information and facilitating regional cooperation and networking for knowledge-sharing and the transfer of successful practices and experiences.

C. Promoting environmental protection as an opportunity for sustainable economic growth

29. There is a general perception that environmental considerations are a cost and therefore a constraint on economic growth. There appears to be enormous market potential, however, for environmental goods, technologies and services from which the business community and the wider society could benefit, given a conducive policy environment. In that context, it is imperative to promote the idea that environmental protection can provide business opportunities by means of a policy framework that harmonizes environmental considerations with the need for economic growth and strives to enhance and utilize the existing market potential.

1. Objective

30. The main objective of the programme area is to strengthen national capacities for promoting environmental protection as an opportunity for sustainable economic growth.

2. Action areas

31. Action areas for identifying and promoting policy measures, and changes in concept and systems may include the following:

- (a) Promoting environment-related investment and environmental technology research and development as an opportunity for economic growth, employment and industrial competitiveness;
- (b) Promoting environmentally sound technologies and facilitating their adaptation, diffusion and transfer;
- (c) Promoting and creating a positive synergy between the environment and economy;
- (d) Promoting the role of the private sector in presenting the environment as a business opportunity, not as a burden or cost for the economy and private sector;
- (e) Presenting environmental regulations and demands for environmental quality as an opportunity to promote the environmental industry and the market for environmental goods and services;
- (f) Establishing policy frameworks that encouraging the creation of new market opportunities for infrastructure, goods and services as well as technologies related to pollution control and environmental resource management;
- (g) Taking advantage of government purchasing power in facilitating market-building and making cleaner production activities profitable in the early stages;
- (h) Enhancing consumer awareness of environmentally friendly products;
- (i) Encouraging sustainable ecotourism, taking into consideration the potential of the natural environment of the Asian and Pacific region to generate income for its residents.

3. Activities

National

32. Activities for promoting environmental protection as an opportunity for sustainable growth and development at the national level may include the following:

- (a) Establishing policy frameworks that encourage the creation of new market opportunities for infrastructure, technologies, products and services;
- (b) Formulating and implementing strategic approaches to encourage investment in environmental infrastructure and services;
- (c) Promoting public-private partnerships for the creation of favourable conditions for environmental investments;
- (d) Encouraging and facilitating private sector action to develop and exploit opportunities offered by growing environmental markets;
- (e) Promoting public procurement policies that encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally sustainable goods and services;
- (f) Promoting environmentally sound technologies and facilitating their adaptation, diffusion and transfer;
- (g) Undertaking research and development on clean technologies, environmental market potential and environmental investments;
- (h) Promoting recycling economies by means of incentives, regulatory mechanisms and awareness-raising;
- (i) Developing and adopting, where appropriate, on a voluntary basis, effective, transparent, verifiable, non-misleading and non-discriminatory consumer information tools to provide information relating to sustainable consumption and production, including human health and safety aspects;
- (j) Encouraging the development and strengthening of consumer associations and non-governmental organizations to enhance consumer awareness of environmentally friendly products and services.

Regional and subregional

33. Activities for promoting environmental protection as an opportunity for sustainable economic growth and development at the regional and subregional levels may include the following:

- (a) Promoting a level playing field on environmental market access and competition among countries;

(b) Providing countries with technical assistance and advisory services in formulating and implementing strategic approaches to the development of environmental markets and encouraging environmental investments;

(c) Supporting demonstration projects on public-private partnerships for promoting investment in environmental technologies, goods and services;

(d) Developing and strengthening clearing houses on environmentally sound technologies;

(e) Facilitating access to financing on favourable terms for the purpose of creating an enabling environment at the subregional, regional and international levels for environmental investments.

C. Integrating disaster risk management into socio-economic development policies and planning

34. The tsunami that occurred in the Indian Ocean in December 2004 was one of the most tragic disasters in recent history and again testifies to the importance of the ecosystems in mitigating the tremendous detrimental impact of natural disasters on human lives and livelihoods. It was also a powerful reminder that the impact of disasters remains a significant challenge to sustainable development. In this context, sustainable economic growth needs to address the intrinsic relationship between disaster reduction on the one hand and sustainable development on the other. It is therefore important to further build the resilience of nations and communities to disasters.

1. Objective

35. The main objective of the programme area is to strengthen national capacities for enhanced integration of disaster risk management into socio-economic development policies and planning.

2. Action areas

36. Action areas for integrating disaster risk management into socio-economic development policies and planning may include the following:

(a) Integrating disaster risk reduction into national and local development policies;

(b) Strengthening the legal and institutional framework for effective disaster risk management;

(c) Identifying, assessing and monitoring disaster risks;

(d) Reducing underlying risk factors;

(e) Building capacity in disaster risk management at all levels.

3. Activities

37. At the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in Kobe, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005, the Hyogo Framework for Action, 2005-2015, was adopted. That Framework, together with the activities of the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the initiatives for the establishment of a tsunami early warning system for the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia, promotes a strategic and systematic approach to reducing vulnerability to disasters.

National

38. Activities for integrating disaster risk management into socio-economic development policies and planning at the national level may include the following:

- (a) Developing national policy and legislation to reduce and minimize vulnerability to natural hazards and disasters and enhance emergency preparedness, response and recovery;
- (b) Developing and operationalizing national disaster monitoring;
- (c) Developing and standardizing a methodology for disaster monitoring;
- (d) Improving the collection, harmonization, exchange and analysis of data;
- (e) Promoting awareness-raising about natural hazards and response and recovery strategies;
- (f) Designing and implementing emergency preparedness, response and recovery programmes at the local community level.

Regional and subregional

39. Activities for integrating disaster risk management into socio-economic development policies and planning at the regional and subregional levels may include the following:

- (a) Identifying, promoting and replicating good practices for disaster prevention, preparedness, response and recovery/rehabilitation;
- (b) Improving the harmonization of approaches and methodology;
- (c) Developing regional and subregional disaster early warning systems as appropriate;
- (d) Promoting regional and subregional information-sharing and awareness-raising.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

40. The activity areas proposed for the national level in the Plan should be harmonized and linked with the national strategies for sustainable development that either have been formulated or are being developed and should be recognized as essential elements and building blocks. The national-level implementation will primarily be the responsibility of the respective Governments in partnership with the private sector and civil society. The efforts of Governments would be supported and supplemented

by activities at the subregional, regional and global levels. In particular, such assistance could be obtained from regional and international organizations.

A. Resource mobilization and partnership-building

41. Financing is crucial for the implementation of any plan. While it is appropriate and necessary to remind donor countries of their commitments to support the efforts of developing countries to reduce poverty and achieve environmental sustainability, it is also clear that self-financing, innovative financing and partnerships present substantial and immediate opportunities to support efforts to achieve environmentally sustainable economic growth. It is also clear that such efforts, in preventing environmental degradation, will protect future prospects for economic growth, reduce economic loss and in many cases result in net economic benefits. This would reduce the financing gap and place the region in a good position to show commitment to both environmental protection and economic growth objectives.

42. In Asia and the Pacific, there is enormous potential and opportunity (a) to increase eco-efficiency in the production and consumption of resources, (b) to develop and explore markets for environmental technologies, products and services, (c) to establish more effective environmental governance, (d) to redeploy resources, (e) to refine priorities through domestic policy reforms, (f) to develop public-private-civil society partnerships to promote investment in environmental protection, (g) to explore innovative financing mechanisms, such as Clean Development Mechanism projects and debt-for-nature swaps, and (h) to invest in protecting their natural resources capital as a way of ensuring the sustainable provision of environmental goods and services that support economic growth.

B. Capacity-building

43. Each programme area of the Plan is strongly focused on capacity-building. Regional organizations such as ESCAP, international organizations such as UNEP and UNDP and development banks such as ADB have played a major role in capacity-building for sustainable development in the region. They have also facilitated regional, multilateral and bilateral cooperation, which is often the most effective means of capacity-building. It is recognized that sustainable development is the long-term objective of members and associate members and that resources should continue to be made available to support capacity-building efforts to this end. However, it is also acknowledged that without environmentally sustainable economic growth, sustainable development will be difficult to achieve. With this in mind, international and regional organizations may consider refocusing support activities to build the capacity of members and associate members, especially countries with economies in transition and developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries, which may be facing critical challenges with respect to the impact of production and consumption patterns on their natural environment.

C. Access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies

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44. Another important approach for the achievement of sustainable development in the region is access to and transfer of technology that is economically viable, environmentally sound and socially acceptable, as recommended in chapter 34 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and on a concessionary and preferential basis, as called for in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Research, development and training activities conducted by pioneering institutions in the region show that the uptake of technologies that support sustainable development has been slow. However, through the work of such institutions as the International Environmental Technology Centre and the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology and in the expectation that the World Trade Organization will ensure the net benefits of globalization, mechanisms for the achievement of sustainable development, including the flow of additional financing and the transfer of technology, are likely to be strengthened.

D. Stakeholder involvement

45. All stakeholders have an important role to play in the effort to achieve sustainable development. While Governments are expected to take the lead in particular as regards policy coherence, other relevant stakeholders also have important roles to play.

46. Civil society in general and NGOs in particular have shown a commitment to promoting sustainable development. Their full participation is necessary for the successful implementation of the Regional Implementation Plan. The Plan therefore advocates a participatory approach that fully involves NGOs and civil society in planning and implementation, including decision-making processes.

47. The private sector is already a major force in the economic development of the region and has the potential to play a strong role in protecting the environment and promoting sustainable ecosystem management. Public-private partnerships must be forged in order to internalize environmental costs and promote sustainable production patterns as an integral part of overall development strategies. The private sector can explore and develop markets for environmental goods and services and mobilizing investment.

48. The academic and scientific communities can offer opportunities for all stakeholders to guide them on innovative measures for promoting sustainable development.

V. INITIATIVES

49. The primary responsibility for taking the actions identified in the Plan rests with national Governments. Regional and subregional cooperation is an important mechanism for supporting national efforts and taking joint action as appropriate. In this regard, the preparatory process for the Ministerial Conference identified a number of regional and subregional initiatives to support national action, as shown in the table.

Regional and subregional initiatives

Initiative		Main partners identified to date	Likely funding sources
Regional initiatives			
Seoul Initiative on Environmentally Sustainable Economic Growth (Green Growth)		ESCAP	Republic of Korea
Environment as a business opportunity in the sustainable economic growth of the Asian and Pacific region		Asian Development Bank (ADB), ESCAP	ADB
Integrating disaster risk management and preparedness into socio-economic development policies and planning		ESCAP lead role	Republic of Korea
Poverty and environment		United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), ADB	UNDP, ADB
Subregional initiatives			
Central Asia	Central Asian countries initiative on a land management programme for combating land degradation	ADB lead role with multiple partners	Global Environment Facility (GEF), ADB, other donors/national funding
	Central Asia Initiative on Sustainable Development and Regional Environmental Action Plan	Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development in Central Asia, Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia	GEF, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), European Union, national financial mechanisms
North-East Asia	Dust and sandstorm prevention and mitigation (phase II)	ADB lead role, UNEP, ESCAP, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification	GEF, ADB, participating Governments
	Mitigation of climate change (innovative technologies and transport sector development)*	ESCAP	Funding required
	A Framework for Nature Conservation Programme for North-East Asia	North-East Asian Subregional Programme of Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC), ESCAP	Core Fund of NEASPEC
South-East Asia	Education for sustainable development with a focus on sustainable consumption and production*	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, ESCAP, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Consumer Association of the Republic of Korea	Funding required
South Asia	Land degradation*	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Funding required
Pacific	Sustainable community lifestyles in Pacific island countries (focus areas: adaptation to climate change, ecotourism, natural resource management)*	South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, ESCAP	Funding required

* Initiative to be developed.

50. At the regional level, the key implementation initiative is the Seoul Initiative on Environmentally Sustainable Economic Growth (Green Growth). This initiative is based on three main action areas: (a) improving environmental sustainability; (b) enhancing environmental performance; and (c) promoting environmental protection as an opportunity for economic growth and development. This overarching initiative, together with other regional initiatives, is listed in the table.

51. While the Plan identifies environmentally sustainable economic growth as a means of achieving sustainable development, it is clear that sustainable development requires the social development aspect to be addressed in tandem. Poverty, which could be described as the major social problem facing the region, is often linked with environmental degradation. Although there are widening efforts to promote environmental improvement for poverty reduction, the effectiveness of such programmes requires an improved understanding of poverty-environment linkages and how they can be tackled. The Poverty and Environment Initiative, developed by UNDP, seeks to assist Asian and Pacific countries in developing their capacity to integrate (a) environmental concerns into national planning and policy frameworks for poverty reduction and (b) the socio-economic concerns of poor and vulnerable groups into the formulation and implementation of environmental and natural resource management policies. The Poverty and Environment Programme, implemented by ADB with initial contributions from the Governments of Norway and Sweden, is designed to accelerate learning how best to mainstream environmental considerations into national poverty reduction strategies and programmes and to invest in environmental improvement that benefits the poor. It supports innovative pilot interventions, targeted analytical studies and the identification and dissemination of promising approaches to assist developing countries in improving the management of natural systems for sustainable rural livelihoods, reducing pollution, which has a direct impact on the health and productivity of the urban poor, and lessening the vulnerability of poor communities to natural hazards.

52. In the area of a regional strategy for tsunami and natural disaster reduction, the Seoul Initiative is expected to be implemented within the Hyogo Framework for Action, 2005-2015, adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, and in concert with the activities of the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and other initiatives on the establishment of a tsunami early warning system for the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia.

53. A number of subregional initiatives identified by the Ministerial Conference for follow-up will be implemented by several organizations in a variety of sectoral areas in the period following the Conference. These initiatives are also shown in the table.

54. In addition, some other organizations have their own ongoing initiatives or programmes that are recognized and incorporated into the framework of the present Plan. For example, ADB and its partners will support the next phases of work on two important subregional initiatives, the Clean Air Initiative for Asian Cities, phase II, and the Core Environmental Programme of the Greater Mekong Subregion. Initiatives under the Plan should take into account these and other similar initiatives to build linkages and synergies. ESCAP will continue to support the initiatives on poverty reduction and the environment through pro-poor public-private partnerships.

55. Considering the importance of stakeholder dialogue, the relevant initiatives of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Environment and Development are also recognized, and should be coordinated with the Plan.

VI. REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT MECHANISM

56. The Commission will undertake a periodic review of progress made in the implementation of the Plan based on information provided by members and associate members on a voluntary basis, and the final review report will be submitted to the sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development, in 2010.

Annex III

SEOUL INITIATIVE ON ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH (GREEN GROWTH)

I. PREAMBLE

1. The Seoul Initiative on Environmentally Sustainable Economic Growth (Green Growth) is aimed at addressing some of the major policy issues highlighted in the Ministerial Declaration of the fifth Ministerial Conference and the Regional Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2006-2010, and furthering their successful implementation. The Initiative presents a justification, targets, policy areas and follow-up activities to realize the theme of the Conference, “Achieving environmentally sustainable economic growth (Green Growth) in Asia and the Pacific”. It also identifies modalities of operation, including the establishment of the Seoul Initiative Network on Green Growth (SINGG), to promote the exchange of information and strengthen policy support to the members and associate members of ESCAP. The Initiative has its origins in the Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2005, and should be read in the context of that Declaration.

2. The Initiative is aimed at promoting regional cooperation through capacity-building and policy consultations among the members and associate members of ESCAP in the following areas:

- (a) Improving environmental sustainability (the way environmental resources are used);
- (b) Enhancing environmental performance (the way environmental resources are managed by reducing pollution and improving ecosystem protection);
- (c) Promoting environment as an opportunity for economic growth and development.

II. JUSTIFICATION

3. Relative to its large population, the Asian and Pacific region has limited environmental carrying capacity and the environment is already showing signs of stress from the environmental pressures arising from the region’s fast economic growth. The extent of future economic growth necessary to reduce poverty in the region is immense.

4. Environmental pressure arising from economic growth has to be reduced if economic growth is to be continued in the long run. Ensuring environmental sustainability is a necessary condition for maintaining economic growth. The Green Growth approach is required to continue the economic growth acutely needed to attain the Millennium Development Goal of poverty reduction while meeting another Goal, that of achieving environmental sustainability.

5. Conventional environmental management has primarily been focused on improving environmental performance in the areas of pollution control and ecosystem management. However, in view of the limited ecological carrying capacity of the region, ensuring environmental sustainability by improving the ecological efficiency of economic growth will be a pressing concern

in the future. The success of Green Growth will depend not only on environmental performance as regards pollution control but also on environmental sustainability in improving ecological efficiency in the way environmental resources are used.

6. The Seoul Initiative aims to expand the scope of conventional environmental management from pollution control and ecosystem management to include improving resource efficiency in the way environmental resources are used.

7. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation calls for a fundamental change in the way societies produce and consume. However, the issue of ensuring environmental sustainability by improving efficiency in the way environmental resources are used has not yet been seriously brought to the attention of the policy makers in the region. This is because improving environmental sustainability by enhancing ecological efficiency is a relatively new challenge and the policy options necessary to improve eco-efficiency are multidisciplinary, require the participation of all stakeholders in society and cannot be led by the environment ministry alone.

8. Policy measures to improve ecological efficiency require policy options focusing on demand-side management which include measures such as improving the efficiency of water and energy consumption and enhancing the efficiency of transport by improving public transport.

9. Pursuing economic growth while maintaining environmental sustainability also requires a fundamental change in the nature of the interactions between environment and economy. A win-win synergy has to be created between environment and economy if economic growth and environmental sustainability are to be harmonized. Interactions between the environment and the economy should no longer be regarded as a zero-sum game.

10. Green Growth is feasible when environmental performance in pollution control is coupled with environmental sustainability in improving ecological efficiency in the way societies produce and consume and pursue economic growth.

11. Thus, in order to move towards a new approach of Green Growth shifting away from the conventional “Grow first, clean up later” approach, it is also crucial to initiate a policy concept and system change towards:

(a) Presenting the environment as an opportunity for economic growth, investment, marketing, industry, employment and technological research and development;

(b) Creating win-win synergies between environment and economy, replacing the prevailing perception of environment and economy as a zero-sum outcome.

12. Drawing on the successes and failures of the Republic of Korea over the last 40 years of rapid economic growth, the Seoul Initiative is aimed at facilitating the Green Growth approach and thus contributing to the creation of an economically vibrant and environmentally sustainable future for

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Asia and the Pacific.

13. The Seoul Initiative will provide a regional cooperation framework for Green Growth and for achieving the Millennium Development Goals on poverty reduction and environmental sustainability in Asia and the Pacific, taking into account the economic, social, cultural and geographical features of the region, through the establishment of SINGG as its mechanism. The Seoul Initiative will provide a framework for policy consultations, capacity-building and networking for the promotion of Green Growth at the regional level.

III. TARGETS AND POLICY AREAS

14. A number of programme and action areas with activities at the national, subregional and regional levels have been proposed in the Regional Implementation Plan. To support the implementation of these programme and action areas, the Seoul Initiative identifies the following targets:

- (a) Improving the environmental sustainability of economic growth;
- (b) Enhancing environmental performance in pollution control and ecosystem management;
- (c) Recognizing that environmental protection presents an opportunity for economic growth and development.

15. Policy areas for the targets identified above are listed further in the document to serve as guidelines for the development of the regional cooperation framework of the Seoul Initiative.

16. The Seoul Initiative Network will be established as the key support mechanism for the implementation of the Seoul Initiative. This network of government officials, local authorities, experts, industry and private sector representatives will be established to undertake activities to promote the targets and issues identified in the policy areas. It will also share information and review the implementation of the activities undertaken within the framework of the Seoul Initiative.

Target 1: Improving environmental sustainability

17. This target area focuses on the efficient use of environmental resources and on improving the ecological efficiency of the economic growth of the ESCAP members and associated members, thus ensuring the environmental sustainability of the Asian and Pacific region. The policy areas identified below will focus on how to enhance the capacity of the members to harmonize fast growth with environmental sustainability.

18. Since improving ecological efficiency and ensuring environmental sustainability are policy goals broader than conventional environmental management, which has been more focused on pollution control, this target area will require shifting the environmental management approach

towards improving the efficiency of resource use by all stakeholders in a society as a whole.

Policy areas: Identify and promote the policy measures and concept and system change necessary to address such issues as:

- (a) Incorporating the concept of ecological efficiency and environmental sustainability into economic and social development planning, since ecological efficiency is critical in ensuring environmental sustainability;
- (b) Sharing experiences on assessing the pressure being placed on the environment by rapid economic growth;
- (c) Enhancing the ecological efficiency of economic growth and harmonizing fast growth with environmental sustainability;
- (d) Promoting sustainable production and consumption patterns by changing the way society produces and consumes as called for in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, possibly by linking them with traditional lifestyles and cultural values;
- (e) Internalizing environmental costs into the price structure by employing various economic instruments such as green GDP and tax incentives of expenditures aimed at ecological sustainability;
- (f) Promoting demand-side management to improve the ecological efficiency in the way society produces and consumes natural resources such as water, energy and raw materials;
- (g) Promoting a circular economy by improving the way society uses the available resources;
- (h) Promoting capacity-building and awareness of Governments, the private sector and civil society concerning the need to improve ecological efficiency;
- (i) Promoting partnership among various stakeholders in society to improve ecological efficiency and environmental sustainability and awareness of the respective roles they are expected to play.

Target 2: Enhancing environmental performance

19. This target area focuses on improving the way environmental resources and control pollution are managed. It also focuses on enhancing the environmental performance of pollution control and ecosystem management by improving conventional environmental administration.

20. While improving environmental sustainability focuses more on the resource efficiency of a society as a whole, enhancing environmental performance focuses more on improving the environmental governance of an administration. While environmental sustainability is more closely related with resource-use efficiency, environmental performance in reducing pollution is more closely related with production processes and regulations and standards for emissions and discharges.

Policy areas: Identify and promote the policy measures and concept and system change necessary to:

- (a) Promote the “polluter pays” principle in managing and protecting the quality of natural resources such as air, water and the natural ecosystem;
- (b) Promote environmentally friendly production processes through the promotion of cleaner production and development and transfer of environmentally sound technologies;
- (c) Promote the effectiveness of environmental governance by upgrading environmental regulations and standards and effectively enforcing legal instruments for pollution control and ecosystem management;
- (d) Promote best practices such as integrated natural resources management and total pollution load control for water, air and oceans;
- (e) Promote partnership among the various stakeholders to enhance their participation and compliance with environmental governance;
- (f) Strengthen close cooperation among the member States and the concerned stakeholders to address transboundary pollution and environmental risks.

Target 3: Promoting environment as an opportunity for economic growth and development

21. This target area aims to create a win-win synergy between environment and economy and present the environment as an opportunity for economic growth and private sector business. Green Growth is feasible only when the prevailing perception that environment is a burden and cost for economic development can be replaced by a positive win-win solution between environment and economy.

22. This target area aims to promote the positive role of the private sector in supporting economic growth through environmental infrastructure investment, increasing demands for better-quality environmental goods and services, research and development for environmentally sound technologies, emerging environmental industry and the market. This target area also aims to maximize the role of the market and the private sector in presenting environmental regulations and demands for improved environmental quality as an opportunity for economic growth and development, not as a burden for the economy.

Policy areas: Identify and promote the policy measures and concept and system change necessary to:

- (a) Promote environment-related investment and environmental technology research and development as an opportunity for economic growth, employment and industrial competitiveness;
- (b) Promote and create a positive synergy between environment and economy;
- (c) Promote the role of the private sector in presenting the environment as a business opportunity, not as a burden or cost for the economy and private sector;

(d) Present environmental regulations and demands for environmental quality as an opportunity to promote the environmental industry and the market for environmental goods and services;

(e) Establish policy frameworks that encourage the creation of new market opportunities for infrastructure, goods and services as well as technologies related to pollution control and environmental resource management;

(f) Promote environmentally sound technologies and facilitate their adaptation, diffusion and transfer;

(g) Take advantage of government purchasing power in facilitating market-building and make cleaner production activities profitable in the early stages;

(h) Enhance consumer awareness of environmentally friendly products;

(i) Encourage sustainable ecotourism taking into consideration the natural environment of the Asian and Pacific region to generate income for its residents.

IV. FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

23. As a follow-up to the fifth Ministerial Conference, the Seoul Initiative will commence with the establishment of SINGG. At its first meeting, SINGG will develop an implementation plan and activities with the participation of ESCAP members (associate members are also welcome).

V. FUNDING

24. Financing for follow-up activities to the Seoul Initiative will be mobilized on a voluntary basis through the Government of the Republic of Korea, ESCAP member States and the international donor community, including organizations such as the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

25. Based on the target and policy areas proposed above, and to stimulate continued Green Growth in the Asian and Pacific region, the ministers are invited to:

(a) Endorse the establishment of SINGG as an implementing mechanism to facilitate the promotion of the Seoul Initiative and invite Governments and relevant organizations from ESCAP members and associate members to participate in the Network;

(b) Agree that the main functions of SINGG are to provide a forum to strengthen regional cooperation among the Governments of ESCAP members and associate members and review progress on follow-up activities to the Seoul Initiative, as well as to set future directions for the Initiative;

(c) Agree that the first meeting of SINGG will be organized by the Republic of Korea with the assistance of ESCAP. At that meeting, SINGG will decide on the modalities, mechanisms and detailed procedures for its operations. It will also develop details of the activities under the Seoul Initiative policy areas;

(d) Encourage ESCAP members and associate members to make a determined and concentrated effort to assist in the implementation of the Seoul Initiative;

(e) In recognition of the contribution of the Government of the Republic of Korea to the funding of the Seoul Initiative, request the donor community to provide adequate financial support to implement the Initiative;

(f) Express deep appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Korea for its continued interest in sharing its experience with the other ESCAP member countries, in particular to further the process of achieving environmentally sustainable economic growth in Asia and the Pacific.

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