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**Progress in the implementation of the Seoul Initiative on
Green Growth****Progress in the implementation of the Seoul Initiative on
Green Growth****Note by the secretariat***Summary*

The Seoul Initiative on Environmentally Sustainable Economic Growth (Green Growth) was adopted at the fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development 2005 with a view to addressing major policy issues highlighted by the 2005 Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2006-2010, and to further their successful implementation. Since it was adopted in 2005, the Initiative has led to diverse activities in a number of focus areas, including (1) establishing an action-based network, (2) promoting policy consultation for green growth, (3) enhancing member's capacity to pursue green growth, and (4) conducting pilot projects to disseminate the green growth approach. The present document reviews the implementation of the Seoul Initiative between 2006 and mid-2010, assesses its achievements and presents the action plan for future activities.

The Conference may wish to discuss the issues and challenges highlighted, and provide guidance on follow-up action to be taken.

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Introduction

1. The Seoul Initiative on Environmentally Sustainable Economic Growth (Green Growth) was adopted at the fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific (2005) as an overarching initiative to address some of the major policy issues highlighted in the Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development and the Regional Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2006-2010, and to further their successful implementation.¹

2. The vision for the Seoul Initiative is to achieve environmentally sustainable economic growth in Asia and the Pacific by promoting effective environmental policies. To achieve this vision, the Seoul Initiative focuses on the following three targets: (a) improving environmental sustainability; (b) enhancing environmental performance; and (c) promoting environment as an opportunity for economic growth and development.

3. As a follow-up to the Ministerial Conference in 2005, ESCAP, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea and the Korea Environment Institute (KEI),² has initiated a range of activities at the regional level in order to implement the Seoul Initiative.

4. The Seoul Initiative Network on Green Growth (SINGG) was established in November 2005. By adopting the Joint Announcement for the Implementation

¹ See Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, *The Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2005* (ST/ESCAP/2379) (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.F.31).

² KEI and Korea Environment Corporation worked as the secretariat for the Seoul Initiative Network on Green Growth from 2005 to 2006 and from 2007 to the present.

of the Seoul Initiative, the members of the SINGG agreed on the following priority activities: (a) establishing an action-based network; (b) promoting a policy consultation forum for green growth; (c) enhancing members' capacity to pursue green growth; and (d) conducting pilot projects to disseminate the green growth approach.

5. As requested by the fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development, the status of the implementation of the Seoul Initiative is to be reported to the Sixth Conference in 2010. To this end, experts began comprehensively reviewing the programmes implemented from 2006 to mid-2010, and the third Network meeting was held in Muju, Republic of Korea, in July 2010, to review the implementation of the programmes and plan future actions.

I. Implementation of the Seoul Initiative Network on Green Growth

6. The Seoul Initiative Network on Green Growth conducts four types of interrelated activities: (a) establishing an action-based network; (b) promoting policy consultation for green growth; (c) enhancing members' capacity to pursue green growth; and (d) conducting pilot projects to disseminate the green growth approach. The implementation of activities is reviewed at Network meetings, which also provide an important mechanism for promoting the exchange of information and experiences and enhancing regional cooperation.

A. Establishing an action-based network

7. The first SINGG Meeting was held in Seoul in November 2005. Participants discussed how to implement the Seoul Initiative, formulated an implementation plan for 2006-2010, and adopted the Joint Announcement for the Implementation of the Seoul Initiative. The Joint Announcement covered the establishment and operation of SINGG, the target areas and focus activities for the effective implementation of the Seoul Initiative.

8. To provide a channel for the active sharing of information among member countries, a website, www.singg.org, was created, and newsletters and booklets have been published on a regular basis to share information on major policy issues related to green growth with member countries.

9. These efforts have enabled active communication among member countries, which, as a result, have shared experiences and expertise on the benefits to the economy and environment. Member countries have had opportunities to review achievements and give feedback, and, by sharing the latest information, have built a progressive knowledge and information system. In particular, real-time information services have enabled member countries to overcome geographical barriers and build a consensus on green growth.

B. Facilitation of policy consultation on green growth

10. To facilitate policy consultation on green growth, a Policy Consultation Forum on Environmentally Sustainable Economic Growth is held once a year in principle. The Policy Consultation Forum aims to enable participating countries and related organizations to exchange information and experiences on how to develop a win-win strategy and synergy between environmental and economic policies and institutional mechanisms to support green growth. Most notably, the purpose of the Policy Consultation Forum is to activate policy suggestions that

will have a pivotal role in addressing the environmental issues of developing countries, raised at the SINGG Meetings.

11. The Policy Consultation Forum has been organized jointly by the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea, the Korea Environment Corporation and ESCAP on an annual basis since 2006. Policymakers from member countries, academia, private sector, and international organizations attended the Forum and discussed approaches to reducing the environmental pressures that accompany rapid economic growth and to improving public awareness of the harmonization of rapid growth and environmental sustainability. The Forum's expert consultation committee meeting, consisting of 10 experts from academia, research institutes and governmental sectors, has selected the following themes in consideration of the goal of achieving green growth in the Asia Pacific region:

- (a) The 1st Policy Consultation Forum (2006): Promoting Sustainable Infrastructure for Green Growth;
- (b) The 2nd Policy Consultation Forum (2007): Application of Economic Instruments for Green Growth;
- (c) The 3rd Policy Consultation Forum (2008): Green Growth and Sustainable Consumption and Production for Climate Action;
- (d) The 4th Policy Consultation Forum (2009): Promotion of Green Industry for Green Growth;
- (e) The 5th Policy Consultation Forum (2010): City Development for Green Growth.

12. The Policy Consultation Forum generated interactive discussion and debate on developing innovative approaches to promote sustainable infrastructure development with the active participation of policymakers, academia, private sector, and international organizations. The Forum has been meaningful in the sense that it has (a) enhanced the role of the Seoul Initiative in the prosperity of the environment and the economy in the Asia-Pacific region, (b) pursued measures for environmental cooperation among countries and strengthened networking, and (c) promoted the idea of green growth through joint implementation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the Asia Pacific Roundtable for Sustainable Consumption and Production (APRSCP) and developed measures to enable policy cooperation.

C. Development and implementation of a capacity-building programme

13. The Seoul Initiative Leadership Programme on Green Growth is designed to improve the working-level capacity of member countries to achieve green growth. The Leadership Programme is closely linked to the Policy Consultation Forum. Its themes and the subprogrammes were selected by considering the contents and results of the Policy Consultation Forum each year.

14. The First Seoul Initiative Leadership Programme on Green Growth was jointly organized by ESCAP and the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea in collaboration with the Korea National Institute of Environmental Human Resources Development in 2006. A total 122 participants from over 20 member countries have attended the Programme so far.

15. The Leadership Programme strengthened the capacity of member countries to achieve green growth by (a) improving the ability of environmental experts to make and execute policies for the efficient implementation of policy initiatives selected at the Policy Consultation Forum, (b) sharing environmental technologies, policies and information among member countries to improve community awareness of the environmental issues of the Asia-Pacific region, and (c) providing practical guidelines for policies related to green growth.

D. Conducting pilot projects for disseminating the concept of green growth

16. Pilot projects have been implemented to apply green growth principles at the national level. The SINGG secretariat (the Korea Environment Corporation) and ESCAP reviewed the proposals for pilot projects submitted by member countries and selected the best proposals for applying the concept of green growth. An expert consultation committee meeting was held for the implementation of selected pilot projects, and experts provided advice on future directions of implementation, policy, and technical issues.

17. Central Governments or local governments in selected member countries conducted the pilot projects in cooperation with ESCAP, the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea and Korea Environment Corporation. The focus areas included: (a) waste management; (b) environmental impact assessment; and (c) green purchase systems. As seen in table 1, seven programmes have been completed since 2008, and four are currently being implemented.

II. Assessment of achievements

18. SINGG has significantly contributed to the promotion of green growth principles in the Asia-Pacific region through the following activities:

(a) Building a regional network for green growth to share experiences and information related to green growth and to disseminate best practices among the member countries;

(b) The Policy Consultation Forum, a regional dialogue platform for discussing how to create synergies between environmental policies and economic policies to support green growth;

(c) The Leadership Programme, which is aimed at developing the capacity of policymakers in each country;

(d) Pilot projects to apply the concept of green growth into the national and local levels.

19. The Seoul Initiative was implemented with phased targets. The first phase (identification), from 2006 to 2007, was very important as its aim was to facilitate the green growth of the Asia-Pacific region. A foundation was built for the Seoul Initiative to operate, and policy consultation and capability-building activities were carried out to promote the idea of green growth. The second phase (implementation), from 2007 to 2009, focused on reaching a consensus for green growth in the region, and pilot projects were conducted on the basis of this consensus.

Table 1
Pilot projects under the Seoul Initiative Network for Green Growth

Pilot project	Implementing organization	Status	Achievements or targets
Ho Chi Minh City Programme for Reduction of Plastic Bag Use	Ho Chi Minh City Waste Recycling Fund	Completed in 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed a sustainable consumption model optimized for the social and economic conditions of Ho Chi Minh City • Suggested measures for reducing the use of plastic bags in the target area
Cambodian Programme for Plastic Waste Management	Cambodia Ministry of Environment	Completed in 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educated policymakers and stakeholders on the principle of reduction, recycling and reuse of plastic wastes • Promoted the guidelines for plastic management in related government bodies, non-governmental organizations, academia and local communities
Vietnamese Programme for Review of Waste Management Measures through E-manifest	Viet Nam Environmental Protection Agency and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment	Completed in 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved awareness of E-manifest, and urged its implementation in Viet Nam • Identified areas requiring the adoption of the E-manifest system • Suggested guidelines for technology development and policymaking for the efficient implementation of the E-manifest system
Supporting the Introduction of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Programme, Lao People's Democratic Republic	Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and International Union for Conservation of Nature	Completed in 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved awareness on SEA by developing comprehensive SEA data package • Improved capacity and knowledge of technical experts on environmental management systems in terms of SEA methodologies and tools, by building the framework for SEA adoption and reaching consensus on the provisional framework

Pilot project	Implementing organization	Status	Achievements or targets
Comprehensive Survey on the Present Status of Hospital Waste Management in Chittagong City Corporation Area, Bangladesh	Chittagong City Corporation, Bangladesh	Completed in 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated the green growth of Chittagong City, successfully conducting a feasibility study on the building of a hospital waste management system in the city
Development of a Carbon Labelling System in China	China Standard Certification Center	Completed in 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced the national capacity to develop a carbon labelling system in China, to promote the development of an eco-efficient low-carbon society Identified key elements in developing a carbon labelling system, and proposed a cost-effective implementation model in China
Development of a Green Public Procurement System in Indonesia	Ministry of Environment	Completed in 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced the national capacity to develop a Green Procurement system in Indonesia Enhanced the knowledge and awareness of key stakeholders on the need for a green public procurement system as a practical policy measure to achieve sustainable consumption and production in Indonesia
Pilot Programme for Solid Waste Recycling of Paro, Bhutan	Paro, Bhutan	Ongoing in 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan to develop a solid waste treatment facility construction plan for Paro and provide directions for improved operation
Waste Management Master Planning Program of Darkhan, Mongolia	Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism	Ongoing in 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan to set up the target to reduce domestic waste and sources of waste in Darkhan
Collection of Baseline Data on the Quality of Three Main Water Bodies in Sri Lanka	Central Environment Authority	Ongoing in 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan to analyse the baseline water quality data and provide efficient water quality management measures for Mahaweli River, Kalu River and Parakramasamudraya Tank
Environmental Cooperation Programme of India	Ministry of Environment and Forests	Ongoing in 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan to identify areas of cooperation for industrial and urban waste treatment, water supply and water purification by hosting seminars on environmental cooperation

20. In implementing the Seoul Initiative, feedback from member countries was very important. Survey questionnaires were circulated among participants in the Network meetings, Policy Consultation Forum, Leadership Programme, and the pilot projects, with a view to identifying the level of understanding on green growth and building a consensus among the participating countries. The questionnaires were also aimed at identifying the motivations of each country for incorporating green growth as a policy objective. The results of pilot projects were presented at workshops, which also served as a venue for evaluating the implementation of the programmes in terms of the extent to which they reflected the principles of green growth.

21. Another major objective of the Seoul Initiative was to promote green growth among diverse stakeholders in addition to member countries of the Asia Pacific region. UNEP, APRSCP and other regional cooperation programmes were encouraged to participate in the Policy Consultation Forum.

Table 2
The Seoul Initiative Network on Green Growth: the numbers

Year	Policy Consultation Forum		Leadership Programme		Pilot Projects		Number of Surveys	Number of Newsletters Published	Number of Consultation Meetings
	<i>Number of participants</i>	<i>Number of participating countries</i>	<i>Number of participants</i>	<i>Number of participating countries</i>	<i>Number of projects</i>	<i>Number of participating countries</i>			
2006	88	20	28	22	-	-	2	12	10
2007	66	17	30	19	-	-	2		
2008	65	21	42	18	3	2	4		
2009	68	18	32	15	4	4	4		
2010	-	-	-	-	4	4	-		

22. The Seoul Initiative actively used the Policy Consultation Forum and the Leadership Programme to promote the idea of green growth in the Asia-Pacific region by improving the capability of member countries. The pilot projects provided critical opportunities to verify the potential of member countries for green growth.

23. Based on the assessment of the SINGG achievements over the past five years, it is considered beneficial to the member countries that SINGG should be continued for the next five years. In addition, the Government of Republic of Korea expressed its readiness to continue financial and technical support for this programme. On this basis, a detailed action plan for future activities has been prepared and presented herewith. The plan is intended to further promote the idea of green growth in the Asia-Pacific region and to facilitate the development and implementation of green growth policies, taking into account the diverse conditions and capacities of each country.

A. Mission statement

24. To achieve sustainable economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region, which has been confronted by three major crises (the global financial crisis, climate change and peak oil), it is necessary to continue implementing green growth policies. Most notably, it is urgent to identify creative and diverse activities that can apply the principles of green growth to the specific contexts of each country, and share the results of these endeavours with other member countries.

B. Selected areas for action

25. Green growth needs to take into account environmental performance in the short term, but, more importantly, it should also focus on environmental sustainability in the long term. Environmental sustainability can be achieved through fundamental changes in socioeconomic activities, such as consumption and production, and by increasing the eco-efficiency of the use of natural resources, eco-services and energy. In order to achieve green growth as a way of responding to the global challenge of climate change, action is needed in four key areas:

- (a) Active use of economic instruments to improve eco-efficiency and integrate the ecological price;
- (b) Develop sustainable infrastructure;
- (c) Promote sustainable lifestyles;
- (d) Promote green business and technology.

26. The objectives and planned activities to be pursued by diverse stakeholders in the above areas are as follows:

	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Planned activities</i>
Economic Instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction/elimination of subsidies for environmentally hazardous practices, and implementation of the eco-tax reform (ETR) - Adoption of mixed policies (market-based and non-market-based) to improve environmental performance - Active use of economic instruments at the local governmental level - Improvement of the capacity of civil society for green growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduce environment taxes with a low rate into a broad scope, and apply a cap-and-trade system to areas requiring more intensive management - Examine the introduction of gradual and phase-based carbon taxes - Gradually abolish tax exemptions for polluting energy sources, and the subsidization of environmentally harmful practices - Strengthen the polluter-pays principle and overhaul the environmental charge system (scope of targets, scope of applicable areas, rate and use of collected charges) - Improve measures to protect low-income citizens and guarantee basic livelihood through the energy voucher system, oil subsidies for small-scale business owners, and other energy welfare programmes - Introduce market-based policies, including the waste collection system based on the price mechanism and the water pollution charge system - Introduce the price mechanism to local environmental management policies (for example, waste collection and recycling) to improve the rate of collection and recycling of wastes - Operate a capacity-building programme for local public officers - Create jobs related to the environment at the local level - Conduct an educational campaign about environmental management policies based on the price mechanism for local residents - Develop programmes for civil participation, and educational materials - Invest in green growth areas with less environmental impact (for example, renewable energy and energy efficiency programmes) - Strengthen the capacity of local governments to develop and implement potential clean development mechanism projects

	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Planned activities</i>
Sustainable lifestyles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Management of demand on infrastructure - Supply of infrastructure to improve eco-efficiency - Accessibility-based supply of infrastructure - Provision of necessary social services while minimizing the use of resources and environmental impact during the infrastructure life cycle - Research into and implementation of a decentralized infrastructure-service delivery system that reduces vulnerability to climate change, provides high eco-efficiency and social acceptance, and is customized for local conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct a thorough and objective analysis to determine whether existing patterns of land use serve as contributions or barriers to improving eco-efficiency - Reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the transport sector by integrating the urban transportation plan and the land use plan - Develop and implement urban plans encouraging the reduction of transport demand by considering the locations and transport activities of diverse facilities - Develop a comprehensive infrastructure supply plan so that sustainable infrastructure can be built in terms of socioeconomic, socio-cultural, institutional and physical accessibility - Provide diverse types of incentives for policies improving the eco-efficiency of infrastructure (for example, life cycle evaluation, strategic environmental impact assessment, social cost and benefit analysis, materials flow analysis and risk assessment) - Develop eco-efficiency indices customized for each country, and operate pilot projects - Examine whether limited budgets are allocated to infrastructures improving eco-efficiency and inclusiveness, and develop measures to achieve institutional improvement - Instead of centralized infrastructure supply systems that use massive amounts of energy to deliver services, decentralized infrastructures that use fewer materials and less energy should be developed and operated (for example, off-grid renewable energy, small-scale water supply networks, local public buses) - Develop and distribute low technology which has high eco-efficiency and can be used at the local community level without reluctance (for example, three-wheeled electric vehicles and photovoltaic systems) - Integrate the technical water supply system and the natural water supply system (for example, rainwater tank) to respond to the water shortage issue caused by climate change

	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Planned activities</i>
Green business and technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of sustainable consumption and production by the central Government as a producer, consumer and coordinator - Adoption of circular economy system at the local level by local governments - Encouragement of corporate social responsibility (CSR) - Enhancement of the capacity of civil society for sustainable consumption and production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a multi-scalar sustainable consumption and production (SCP) monitoring system that integrates national scale, regional scale, urban scale and individual scale by using SCP indicator - Strengthen international governance on the inflow of waste from overseas and domestic resources development - Implement renewable energy programmes that are customized for each region - Facilitate cooperatives at the city and the local levels - Enhance the role of social networks at the community level - Build the social infrastructure for SCP by encouraging the CSR initiatives of foreign businesses at domestic sites, and develop the institution to attract continuous SCP activities (for example, ISO 26000) - Improve the employment conditions of local residents - Cooperate with international organizations pursuing advanced SCP (for example, Oxfam) and attract them to local sites to deal with the issue of the lack of an SCP infrastructure in developing countries - Build a close network with local public officers and local non-governmental organizations for SCP to evaluate the extent to which public officers have reflected lessons learned from advanced SCP training in local policies, and to secure participants for SCP activities - Improve awareness of SCP among local residents through incentives (for example, coupons and discounts) for the purchase of recycled goods
Greening Industry and Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of measures to enhance both social and natural capital - Government support for the business sector to plan and implement sustainability strategies - Expansion of role of the government in the greening of business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop business models or programmes that meet the basic needs of local residents and reduce the environmental impact, taking into account the socioeconomic and ecological conditions and the cultural characteristics of each region - Use regulation-oriented policies, such as the issuance of an environmental protection licence, in less industrialized regions - Operate capacity-building programmes on corporate sustainability strategies - Create an organizational culture that accepts and strengthens the value of sustainability

	<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Planned activities</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhancement of corporate social responsibility - Development of green energy technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop diverse institutional incentives, such as tax exemptions or awards at the government level, to encourage businesses to develop and implement sustainability strategies - Support and encourage businesses in preparing CSR reports - Make policies to support and incubate diverse types of social enterprises (for example, developers and distributors of intermediary technologies customized for developing countries) to achieve social policy goals, such as the eradication of poverty and the development of a sustainable community - Conduct research and consulting programmes on social enterprises with academia and the research sector - Invest in the development of green energy technologies, including technologies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve energy efficiency and waste treatment, and operate human resource development programmes - Develop modules related to green energy technology transfer among SINGG member countries (for example, expert exchange and operation of joint technology development programmes)

C. Means of implementation

27. The measures described below will be taken to facilitate the above activities.

1. Networking

28. Networking among SINGG member countries needs to be further strengthened by promoting use of the website, increasing participation in the publication of newsletters, sharing results and feedback on pilot projects and participating in the development of green energy technology transfer modules. Network meetings should be held every year together with the Policy Consultation Forum, and innovative ways to improve the networking capacity of SINGG members could be gathered and reviewed.

2. International cooperation based on local initiatives

29. It is necessary to operate pilot projects in diverse areas and to share the achievements made in these projects with member countries to develop a detailed road map for green growth. For example, it is important to encourage the transfer of technology and expertise among member countries, particularly as regards success factors. In particular, creative initiatives designed in each area need to be communicated beyond the membership of

SINGG in order to secure international cooperation for financial and technological support.

3. SINGG Award for Eco-efficiency

30. The SINGG Award and its corresponding financial support are to be bestowed upon the best pilot projects that have achieved significant improvements in eco-efficiency. The winners should be chosen through quantitative evaluation measures and fair assessment by consultants.

4. Technology transfer

31. Green growth depends on the development of technologies to improve eco-efficiency, such as green energy technologies, and the transfer of such technologies among member countries. Green technology needs to be customized for the socioeconomic conditions of member countries, but institutional tools are also needed to facilitate technology transfer. As part of these efforts, a “clearing house” for green technology can be installed. The “clearing house” can be added to the existing website of SINGG. It is necessary to accumulate diverse information, including intermediary technology, advanced technology, best technology application practices and support systems, and to allow member countries free access to this information.

5. Financing mechanism

32. Financial support is needed for the activities of SINGG to be continuously enhanced and developed. In addition to its existing financing measures, there is need to access diverse financing sources, including various international cooperation schemes and financing organizations, such as the United Nations Development Programme, the Asian Development Bank, the Global Environment Facility and the World Bank.

D. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanism

33. The application of green growth activities need to be regularly monitored, evaluated and reported, using quantitative indices, for example, the eco-efficiency index. This will enable the assessment of progress in SINGG activities, and provide a reference in choosing the recipients of the SINGG award.

III. Issues for consideration

34. Based on the foregoing assessment of SINGG and the proposed action plan for future activities, member countries may wish to:

- (a) Provide guidance on future implementation of the Initiative;
- (b) Endorse the five-year extension of the Seoul Initiative and the general contents of its action plans in order to stimulate continued green growth in the Asia- Pacific region.