

**The 3rd Policy Consultation Forum of the Seoul Initiative Network on Green Growth:  
*Green Growth and Sustainable Consumption and Production for Climate Action***

18-20 September 2008

Shangri La Mactan Hotel

Cebu, Philippines

Report

From the Third Policy Consultation Forum: Green Growth and Sustainable Consumption  
and Production for Climate Action

Summary of Conclusions

The Third Policy Consultation Forum of the Seoul Initiative Network on Green Growth: *Green Growth and Sustainable Consumption and Production for Climate Action* was held from 18 to 20 September 2008 in Cebu, Philippines. It was held in parallel to the 8<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production and was organized by UNESCAP in collaboration with UNEP and the APRSCP, with generous support from the Korean Ministry of Environment.

The Policy Consultation Forum explored the Green Growth concept of sustainable consumption and production and how it can be used to support further climate action in the region. The meeting was attended by more than 65 participants from 19 ESCAP member countries as well as other UN agencies, international organizations and research institutions and was held over three consecutive days. On the first day the forum commenced with a joint opening ceremony with the 8<sup>th</sup> Asia and Pacific Roundtable on Sustainable Consumption and Production, where Mr. Shigeru Mochida, Deputy Executive Secretary of UNESCAP and Dr. Byoung-Wook Lee, Vice Minister of Environment of the Republic of Korea had keynote speeches. The first day focused on sustainable consumption and Green Growth and examined how both UNESCAP and the Seoul Initiative Network on Green Growth can facilitate a regional process for the formulation of the Asian and Pacific region inputs into the 10<sup>th</sup> Year Framework of Programmes on SCP, also known as the Marrakech process.

The second day sessions focused on innovative financing and market mechanisms for low carbon societies and country presentations on Green Growth policy tool application. During the afternoon, discussions focused on how the Asia and Pacific region can take the lead on the Marrakech process, on carbon-friendly consumption patterns and the role of consumers in reducing GHG emissions.

The third day session focused on the results of a regional study for promotion of publicly funded environmentally sound technology transfer, while examining the national policy and institutional systems of innovation of a number of countries across the Asian and Pacific region, including China, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Republic of Korea. The afternoon session focused on a review of the SINGG activities and the work plan

for 2008-2010, while the meeting was concluded by the adoption of the revised SINGG document.

### **The Asia and Pacific Situation**

The Asia and Pacific region is the most economically dynamic in the world and has been at the forefront of the 21<sup>st</sup> century surge in economic growth, a situation driven primarily by exports and which has led to expanded production requirements needed to fuel an ever increasing amount of trade. As countries in the Asia Pacific region experience rapid economic growth, increasing pressure has been placed on the limited environmental carrying capacity. Coupled with evolving production patterns, these impacts are driving changes in consumption patterns in these countries and policies are needed to ensure that these developments will be environmentally sustainable. The past axiom of “*grow first, clean up later*”, can not apply in a region that has such a limited natural resource base and a rapidly growing population directly dependent on natural resources.

In addition, such steadfast growth has produced a huge increase in greenhouse gas emissions. Asia and the Pacific is one of the most vulnerable regions in the world to the adverse effects of climate change. Therefore each country in the region has a pressing need to evaluate the possible future impacts of climate change, to identify and formulate both region-wide and country-specific plans for mitigation, and ultimately increase their capacity to adapt to these changes. However, despite the urgency to respond to the challenges, many member countries are not yet ready because of their limited capacity and awareness. As a result it is crucial to strengthen the mechanisms to assist member countries, in particular the least-developed countries, to understand and take appropriate measures to cope with the coming changes.

Efforts to mitigate climate change must be complementary with economic development which allows countries to pursue strategies for sustainable economic growth and the enhancement of living standards. The type of development path that is pursued will have a direct impact on the severity of the changes and vulnerability of countries. In this context, countries in the region need to ensure their economic growth by harmonizing environmental sustainability with climate resilience.

### **Policy Directions and Recommendations**

After discussing various experiences and policy options regarding Green Growth policy tools and climate action the third Policy Consultation Forum concluded that:

#### **Sustainable Consumption, Green Growth and the Marrakech Process**

- The Green Growth approach lead by UNESCAP was highly praised by UNDESA, UNEP, UNIDO and the 8th APRSCP as the regional strategy for achieving sustainable development and covering all the major issues in the Marrakech Process for development of the 10th Year Framework of Programmes on SCP (10YFP);
- It was recommended that the Green Growth Approach with its five tracks on green tax and budget reform, sustainable infrastructure, sustainable consumption, green business and ecological efficiency indicators can be strengthened to become the regional framework of programmes for SCP in the Asian and Pacific Region. For that purpose it was suggested to build further partnerships, including with businesses;

- Countries in the Asia and Pacific region should take the lead on some of the Marrakech Task forces;
- There are considerable innovations and innovative practices that bring substantial progress on sustainable consumption and production throughout the region and these need to be further promoted and expanded;
- Improvements in the awareness of Green Growth concepts for climate action are needed among policy makers, planners and decision makers to create innovative policy and financial environment to improve resource and energy efficiency and increase economic benefits, while achieving sustainable consumption and production;
- Low carbon development strategies at both regional and national levels would strongly enhance the sustainability of consumption and production and would decouple the economy and reduce its dependence on expensive, carbon intensive energy sources.
- The Regional Help Desk on Sustainable Consumption and Production jointly established by UNESCAP and UNEP also launched its website and presented its strategy and planned activities for implementing a number of projects on SCP.

### **Innovative Financing and Market Mechanisms for Low Carbon Societies**

- New carbon taxes and carbon trade markets can help develop low carbon societies in the Asia and Pacific region;
- Markets are driven principally by prices (also by public perception/reputation etc.). Therefore, pricing will be critical to reduce energy use and to reduce the amount of GHG emissions;
- Public policy must systematically use prices to drive markets in the desired direction. (greater resource efficiency, reduced emissions, more dynamic innovation/new industries);
- The participants recognised that energy pricing can be politically contentious as the increased costs may be passed on to the poor;
- There is a need for greater transparency from companies in the Asia and Pacific region in regards to disclosure of their real GHG emissions, many are not yet prepared for climate action;
- There is a need for more financial mobilisation to assist SMEs in developing countries with climate actions.

### **Country Presentations and discussions on Green Growth Policy Tools Applications**

- More regional cooperation is needed to disseminate best practices between countries in the region in regards to the utilization of Green Growth policy tools;

- More national capacity building is needed to further the implementation of Green Growth policy tools across the region.

### **Carbon Friendly Consumption Patterns and the Role of Consumers**

- There is a need for more transparency from local utilities regarding future energy prices;
- Governments in the region should utilize the data available from consumption surveys;
- There has been a lack of comprehensive statistical data and information in regards to the eco-efficiency of production and consumption in many countries. Life cycle assessments of the impact of consumption patterns should be further applied in the region;
- Eco-labelling is another successful positive rewarding measure, which enhances eco-efficiency and environmental performance of the private sector. Moreover, there is a need for more regional cooperation between countries on eco-labelling standards.

### **Promotion of Publicly Funded Environmentally Sound Technologies (ESTs)**

- The regional study on the promotion of publicly funded EST transfer, which was presented at this special session, concluded that EST transfer is a complex and intricate process, which relates to varied issues like IPR, patent laws, special protection of local producers, commercial law, national technical capacity and expertise, and national policies and regulations, however the role of the Governments and public funding is still quite significant, especially in the fast growing countries of Asia.
- To make the regional process of North-South and South-South EST transfer more efficient, effective and successful, and to move a step further from pure “good will politics” more is required.
- Governments need to establish national innovation frameworks and institutions (centralized or by sector) that could lead the EST process from A to Z and ensure full support throughout the full EST transfer cycle from inception to commercialization and transfer;
- The meeting recommended that UNESCAP and its Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology take the lead in supporting Governments to establish such national innovation systems and by creating a regional cooperation network to support regional North-South and South-South cooperation for EST transfer;
- Opportunities for collaboration between the EisMAP programme developed by Kyoto University, Japan and APCTT, including the existing EST network were further considered and highly recommended.

## Key Issues and Outcomes

- UNEP and UNDESA promulgated the UNESCAP lead Green Growth strategy for sustainable development as a viable regional platform for the development of 10<sup>th</sup> Year Framework of Programmes on SCP in the Asian and Pacific region. It was also announced that the 4<sup>th</sup> International Expert Meeting on SCP will be jointly organized by UNDESA, UNEP and UNESCAP at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok in the fall of 2009.
- UNESCAP was invited to become a member of the Marrakech Process Advisory Committee Council and to attend the second meeting to be held on 23 October 2008 in UNEP DTIE, Paris, France;
- It was recommended to UNESCAP to consider how to create an official linkage between the Green Growth Approach and the Marrakech Process;
- UNESCAP can lead the process of regional consultations and reviews of national SCP policies (existing and in preparation), national gaps, and define the regional priorities through a regional matrix;
- The Regional Help Desk on Sustainable Consumption and Production, established by UNESCAP and UNEP can become the regional clearing house, where examples of good practices and innovations could be registered, recorded and reported through the Marrakech process;
- It was recommended to UNESCAP to seek the opportunity to integrate the eco-efficiency indicators as indicators for the implementation of the 10YFP;
- UNEP expressed an interest in making the background paper regarding Green Growth and climate actions into a publication;
- Since capacity building for the application of Green Growth policy tools was highly recommended, UNDESA has committed to support the Green Growth capacity building programme of UNESCAP and to cater for additional requests beyond its country and sub-regional scope (Central Asia, GMS and Pacific Islands). UNEP has offered to support substantively by providing available training manuals and tools, as well as experts;
- An Expert Advisory Committee will be established at the Secretariat of the SINGG so that member countries can be asked to appoint representatives to act as advisors in regards to the further promotion of the Green Growth concepts in the region.