

Opening remarks of the Preparatory Meeting
for the International Conference on Green Industry in Asia
4-5 March 2009
UNCC, Bangkok

**Opening statement by
Mr. Siva Thampi
Director, Environment and Development Division, UNESCAP**

Wednesday, 4 March 2009, 9.00

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honor for me today to welcome all of you to the Preparatory Meeting for the International Conference on Green Industry in Asia, which is a fine example of our UN working as one, being organized by UNIDO in collaboration with ESCAP and UNEP.

A special welcome to

Mr. Edsel Custodio, Undersecretary for International Economic Relations,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, and

Our colleagues from UNIDO and

Ms. Hunter Lovins, President and founder of Natural Capitalism Solutions.

This Preparatory Meeting and the Green Industry Conference itself take place at a very important time and focus on issues of primary importance for the further economic development of the Asian and Pacific region.

The current economic crisis is storming the world and badly affecting this region. Countries are already suffering from unstable financial markets, drying investments and declining exports and demand. The magnitude and intensity of the recession is shaking the foundations of development models of the world and is questioning these in the region, which have focused on rapid export driven economic growth and industrialization.

These policies have overused natural resources, failed to lift a majority of the population out of poverty and triggered severe consequences on our climate. This crisis is showing the limits of our policies and the need for new ones.

Learning from our mistakes, we now have the opportunity to respond to global challenges in a comprehensive manner. Beyond stimulus and bail out packages, holistic and ambitious economic development strategies are needed. Economic recovery, environmental protection and poverty reduction are all elements of the answers to today's troubles.

Green Industry is among these solutions, as it offers a link between market opportunities, industrialization, sustainable consumption and production, and sustainable resource management. It also provides an arena for application of the Green Growth policy tools that have been developed and advocated by ESCAP since the adoption of the Green Growth approach at the 5th Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development held in March 2005 in Seoul, Republic of Korea. ESCAP is delighted to be involved in the International Conference on Green Industry in Asia, as this meeting will provide a chance to consider further synergy between greening the economy and greening the industry of the countries in the region. Cleaner production, energy and water efficient production processes, green jobs, low carbon development and eco-friendly products are all elements which will help create new opportunities to bridge sustainable and human development with economic growth.

Until recently, growth was measured only by its "quantity", leaving aside its "quality". The time has come for countries to adopt growth strategies that ensure ecological sustainability along with social inclusiveness. The "Green Growth" approach is spurring creativity and innovation for green markets and investments through new policies for greening the industries and jobs. The example of the policies undertaken in the Republic of Korea show that Green Growth can be a pioneering and concrete sustainable economic development model. Green Growth is also becoming the fundament for joint action between the UN agencies in the region, as advocated by ESCAP, to assist countries to build low carbon and climate change resilient societies.

However, improving the way we use resources, our production and consumption patterns can be achieved only by the concerted action of all citizens, whether they are government officials, private sector or consumers. In this regard the International Conference on Green Industry in Asia to be held in from 9 to 11 September 2009 is a unique opportunity to bring together representatives of industry and business together with policy and decision makers at one table to reach consensus on the key approaches and ESCAP looks forward to supporting this important event.

With this I would like to wish you a fruitful and productive preparatory meeting and constructive deliberations over the next two days.

Thank you.