



Meeting Information

* DATE

July, 14th(Wed) ~ 15th(Thur), 2010

* VENUE

ICC JEJU, Jeju, Republic of Korea

* THEME

International collaboration for reinforcement of the national capacity on environment and health

* PARTICIPANTS

Over 200 People including the ministers of Environment and health relevant expert and the press from over 14 Asian countries.

* ORGANIZERS

UNEP, WHO, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Health and Welfare

* BACKGROUND

Every year, an estimated 6.6 million deaths in Asia are attributable to various modifiable environmental health risks, accounting for one quarter of all deaths in the region. Despite the magnitude of this health problem, the capacities of countries, especially in developing countries, to deal with environmental health problems are limited and require strengthening. In addition, better coordination between health and environment agencies is needed to develop and implement effective environmental health programmes. Some environmental health issues are transboundary and require concerted policies and approaches by countries to address them. For other issues, effective policies and approaches can be shared among countries facing similar threats.

* VISION

Sustainable development encompasses nurturing of the environment, enhancing economic growth and social equity to reduce poverty, promoting the health and well-being of people and encouraging partnerships and cooperation among various stakeholders and countries in the region.

We recognize that without environmental and health protection development will be undermined. Without economic growth, which is essential to poverty reduction and improving the quality of life, protection of the environment and the promotion of health will also fail.



Thus, our vision is to safeguard and enhance health and the environment, thereby promoting the development that reduces poverty.

For that to be possible, the interplay of health and environment and their role in poverty reduction needs to be understood and addressed.

We believe this will be achieved by a national approach that integrates the efforts of various stakeholders in preserving the environment with the protection of human health and well-being. We also believe that national efforts for environmental preservation and health protection may be affected by development activities and the environmental and health conditions in neighbouring countries. Thus, greater regional partnership and cooperation are needed to address common interests and threats to the region.

* GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The general objective of this regional initiative is to effectively deal with the environmental health problems within countries and among themselves by increasing the capacity of Southeast and East Asian countries on environmental health management.

It aims to strengthen the cooperation of the ministries responsible for environment and health within the countries and across the region by providing a mechanism for sharing knowledge and experiences, improving policy and regulatory frameworks at the national and regional level, and promoting the implementation of integrated environmental health strategies and regulations.

Specifically, this initiative aims to assist countries to:

- (1) effectively and efficiently achieve their targets on Health, Environmental Sustainability, Poverty, and Global Partnership for Development under the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDG);
- (2) institutionalize the integrated management of environmental health at all levels within each participating country and among the Southeast and East Asian countries through the setting up of a coordinative institutional mechanism; and
- (3) enable countries to assess priority environmental health risks, develop and implement cost-effective National Environmental Health Action Plans (NEHAP) and disseminate the same to the various stakeholders.

* THE WAY FORWARD

Member countries of the Southeast and East Asian Region should:

- Undertake the best possible actions available to address and eventually reverse the trend of environmental degradation and its negative impact on health to ensure the implementation of global and regional agreements such as the Millennium Development Goals;
- Establish and/or strengthen existing interagency and multi sectoral technical working groups and national coordination mechanisms/processes and link these with other countries in the



region to facilitate capacity-building, the exchange of information, technology, resources and learning;

- Prepare and regularly update the NEHAP, or equivalent plans, and ensure implementation so that priority environmental health issues in the country are effectively addressed;
- Build the capacity of various stakeholders so that they can be mobilized to support the implementation of the NEHAP;
- Strengthen collaboration among themselves and with other regional and global intergovernmental bodies on transboundary, regional, and global environmental health issues, including attendance at the Regional Forum;
- Strongly advocate for adequate budgets and resources for the environment and health sectors within their countries;
- Ensure that the Charter is widely disseminated within each country and across the region in the languages of the region.

International partner organizations are encouraged to:

- Support this regional initiative by providing needed technical and financial assistance and sharing information and expertise;
- Support the development and implementation of NEHAP and equivalent plans;
- Intensify coordination and cooperation among themselves to build synergies, prevent duplication, and optimize the use of resources;
- Ensure proper coordination with existing intergovernmental processes. Countries and partner organizations should work for the widest possible endorsement of the Charter to ensure the attainment of its objectives.

Ministers responsible for the Environment and Health of Southeast and East Asian countries should meet again within three years to assess both national and regional progress and to agree on specific actions to reduce significant environmental threats to health as swiftly as possible.