



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2000

Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials
31 August–2 September 2000
Kitakyushu, Japan

**DECLARATION, REGIONAL MESSAGE FOR THE “RIO + 10” REVIEW OF
AGENDA 21, AND THE KITAKYUSHU INITIATIVE
FOR A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT**

(Item 8 of the provisional agenda)

**VISION FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: MINISTERIAL DECLARATION ON
ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, 2000**

Note by the secretariat

SUMMARY

Declarations and similar instruments have been used at global and regional conferences to express the common vision and shared commitment. The third Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, held in 1995, raised the issues of environmentally sound and sustainable development with building consensus for sustainable development as the major focus, and the declaration of the 1995 Conference accorded this the necessary priority. The Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2000 will provide a forum for ministers and senior government officials to discuss key environment and sustainable development policies and issues and to identify achievable targets and time frames for the effective implementation of Agenda 21. The Vision for the Twenty-first Century: Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2000 should reflect the commitment and understanding of the region on these policies and issues.

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**VISION FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: MINISTERIAL DECLARATION ON
ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, 2000**

PREAMBLE

We, the Ministers of the members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, having met in Kitakyushu, Japan, on 4 and 5 September 2000 at the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2000,

Rededicating and renewing our commitment to the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the provisions of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 adopted by the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session in June 1997, the Malmö Ministerial Declaration, and the Ministerial Declaration on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific of 1995,

Convinced that economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development, which is the framework for our efforts to achieve a higher quality of life for people throughout Asia and the Pacific,

Acknowledging the importance, in particular, of multilateral environmental agreements such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and the Basel Convention on the Control of the Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, and strengthening the role of developing countries in their further elaboration and implementation through the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,

Recognizing the diversity of the respective economies and natural resource endowments of countries of Asia and the Pacific, which span a diverse range of ecosystems, containing 57 per cent of the world's tropical forest area, one third of the world's mangroves, large expanses of oceans with immense marine resources, two thirds of the world's coral reefs, and numerous deserts, mountain ranges, lakes, rivers and estuaries all supporting a variety of unique ecosystems,

Further recognizing that the pressures of population growth in Asia and the Pacific are the highest in the world, with 58 per cent of the world's population living on 23 per cent of the world's total land area; that there is extreme poverty among one third of the population living below the poverty line; that the diverse ecosystems of the region are highly vulnerable; that underdevelopment and unsustainable development have contributed to environmental degradation; that the urban population in Asia and the Pacific is currently projected to increase to 55 per cent of the total

population of the region by 2020, which will overload urban infrastructures and exacerbate the problems of pollution, shelter, nutrition, health and sanitation,

Acknowledging the positive steps taken following the third Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, held in 1995, by members and associate members of ESCAP, United Nations bodies, multilateral financing institutions, including the Asian Development Bank and other intergovernmental organizations, in the pursuit of environmentally sound and sustainable development notably in the following areas: updating environmental laws and policies, strengthening institutions in the areas of environmental compliance and enforcement, improving decision-making processes for greater accountability and transparency, making efforts at capacity-building of institutions tasked to oversee environmental management in the countries of the region and formulating national conservation strategies and national Agenda 21; promoting public awareness, education, research and training; disaster management; accomplishments in intensifying reforestation efforts, increasing activities in the conservation of biodiversity by declaring new protected areas, river revival programmes, and protection of coastal and marine environments; promoting sustainable policies on protection of the ozone layer; hazardous waste management; protection of natural heritage sites, and some policy initiatives in curbing air and water pollution; promoting multistakeholder participation, in particular, the participation of the business sector, non-governmental organizations, the scientific and academic communities, women and youth; and pursuing activities that would prevent, control and mitigate environmental degradation,

Emphasizing that, given the accelerating pace of the process of globalization, the persistence of poverty, the growing schism between developed and most developing countries and the continued deterioration of the environment, the comprehensive implementation of Agenda 21 as a programme of action for achieving sustainable development worldwide remains vitally important and is more urgent now than ever before,

Further emphasizing that, while unprecedented opportunities for sustainable development are opened up by globalization and trade liberalization, these could also exacerbate environmental degradation,

Acknowledging that many of the developing countries in the region lack adequate finances, the necessary technologies and required human resources capability to fully develop and effectively implement environmental protection and management programmes; that there is an urgent need for the transfer of environmentally sound technology on favourable terms as well as preferential and concessional terms as mutually agreed to by the developing countries of the region, including the least developed and landlocked countries and the small island developing states; and that there is a need to enhance endogenous capacity-building to assess, adopt, manage and apply environmentally sound technologies,

Reiterating the will and the determination of the people and governments of Asia and the Pacific to individually and collectively marshal all the resources of the region and embark on a concerted effort towards environmentally sound and sustainable development in the shortest possible time and the commitment of the developed countries for increased official development assistance in line with chapter 33 of Agenda 21,

Make the following declaration.

**ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

1. In the eight years since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the state of the environment in Asia and the Pacific has deteriorated. To confront the underlying causes of environmental degradation and poverty, we must commit ourselves to the development, application, implementation and integration of nationally determined policies on population management, the protection of human health, poverty alleviation, environmental management and the rational harnessing of resources as essential prerequisites for environmentally sound and sustainable development at the national level. Furthermore, countries in the region need to take steps to integrate environmental protection and management into the development process as a means of achieving environmentally sound and sustainable development; and to consolidate and promote greater regional and subregional cooperation in all spheres of environment and development. In doing this, we will endeavour to obtain the optimum participation of the people, particularly women, youth and children, non-governmental organizations, local authorities and the private sector in the protection and management of the environment in the region.

2. Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the achievements in the development of multilateral environmental agreements have been notable. In this connection, we must further commit ourselves to the expeditious conclusion of ongoing and planned negotiations on international legal instruments and agreements related to environment and sustainable development and to ensuring the participation of all states in relevant existing international environmental agreements. Furthermore, synergies among activities stemming from environment-related conventions and those undertaken by international organizations should be enhanced and promoted.

3. The maintenance of a proper balance between economic development, population growth, the use of natural resources and environmental protection is crucial for sustainable development. We need to move towards more sustainable patterns of production and consumption through the implementation of appropriate policy mixes, which should include economic instruments, regulatory measures, awareness-building and education. We must also use market mechanisms effectively and

find ways of increasing business and employment opportunities relating to global environmental issues.

4. Trade and environment policies should be mutually supportive and promote sustainable development. Trade policy measures for environmental purposes should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade. Furthermore, measures should be promoted to strengthen the sustainable development capacities of the low income countries.

5. An essential tool in the development of sustainable development policy is accurate assessment of environmental conditions and trends. To this end, we affirm the importance of identifying areas where more scientific data and more probing assessments need to be incorporated, and ensuring the best use of recent technological progress such as information technology for addressing the problems and developing innovative technology that can be used in resolving problems in these areas. We request members and associate members of ESCAP and all relevant international bodies to promote scientific research and assessment that help to explicate phenomena in environment-related fields.

FINANCING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

6. There is, at present, a need to refocus current capacity-building efforts with the emphasis on effective and efficient use of limited resources as well as on regional and subregional cooperation.

7. Given the financial constraints faced by countries in the region as a result of the recent economic crisis and the decline in official development assistance, other sources of financing for sustainable development are crucial. We request members and associate members of ESCAP, donor countries, relevant United Nations bodies, multilateral funding institutions and other intergovernmental organizations to provide adequate financial resources and actively promote the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, including state-of-the-art technologies for implementation of the regional and subregional action programmes and national action plans.

8. We further urge developed countries to honour their commitments made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in terms of official development assistance and request that technology transfer be fulfilled and the additional financial and other resources be made available to developing countries. We support the early replenishment of concessional funds in multinational financial institutions. We also encourage the development of environmental funds at national level through innovative and emerging concepts of financing sustainable development to support national-level activities with the full participation of the donor community. As another source of financing, we resolve to strengthen the participation of the region in the implementation of the Global Environment Facility project through the involvement of implementing agencies

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including the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Bank, and regional institutions such as the Asian Development Bank, and supported by ESCAP.

AGENDA 21 AND THE REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME FOR ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, 2001-2005

9. We adopt the Regional Action Programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development, 2001-2005 as a rational and viable instrument for achieving the common goal of sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific and decide to take steps to implement it, in accordance with the specific conditions of the respective countries of the region and to strengthen the institutional framework and promote capacity-building at the regional, subregional and national levels for this purpose.

10. The General Assembly, at its nineteenth special session, held in June 1997, called for the formulation of national strategies, national environmental action plans, national conservation strategies and environmental management plans for the implementation of Agenda 21 by 2002. We note that many countries in the region have already undertaken such initiatives. We encourage the application of strategic environmental management as a tool to further rationalize those initiatives and promote their implementation.

11. Urban environmental issues will play an increasingly important role in the region in the future. We welcome the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment as a practical and focused measure for implementation of the Regional Action Programme, addressing air and water pollution, waste disposal, the development of urban green areas, and other environmental management and sustainable development issues of megacities and intermediate cities to benefit, where applicable, from the past experience of the city of Kitakyushu and other cities.

12. To ensure effective implementation, we decide to review periodically the progress made in the implementation of the present Declaration and the Regional Action Programme and, in this context, request the Executive Secretary of ESCAP to submit to the Commission annual progress reports for its consideration. We urge the participation of the United Nations Environment Programme, the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and the other relevant organizations in this evaluation. We also request the United Nations Environment Programme, through its Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, to report on the progress made to its Governing Council, as appropriate.

13. To maximize the participation of all stakeholders in the pursuit of sustainable development in the region, we invite non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other interested groups to become actively involved in the development and implementation of projects under the Regional Action Programme.

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**THE 10-YEAR REVIEW OF THE OUTCOME OF THE UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**

14. The review in 2002 of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development will provide a key opportunity to assess the gains made since 1992. Governments of this region should play a major role in the preparations for this review. Towards this end, we agree to submit a message to the 10-year review outlining regional achievements and priorities in the pursuit of environmentally sound and sustainable development, as well as the outcome of the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2000.

CONCLUSION

15. The Asian and Pacific region envisions a future of continuously improving environmental quality sustained by dynamic and vibrant economies and supported by empowered peoples creating a foundation for national unity, regional solidarity and global partnerships for sustainable development. In this, the governments and peoples of the region commit themselves to become architects of a sustainable future. In transforming this vision into action, the countries of the region will take full leadership in doing what has to be done within a framework of long-term commitments that span sectors, countries and generations.

16. We agree to convene the fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific by the year 2005, or at such other time as may be necessary.