

**ASIA-PACIFIC FORUM FOR ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (Second Phase)**

**Second Plenary Meeting**

**31 July-1 August 2006**

**Adelaide, Australia**

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**APFED Policy Dialogue**

**1. Overall achievement in FY2005**

The APFED policy dialogue was launched in FY2005 in response to one of the APFED recommendations for the need to promote sustainable development. Specifically, this means promotion of consensus building and partnership development with a view to developing and implementing sound policies for promoting effective environmental management and achieving sustainable development. APFED is expected to act as a platform for facilitating such policy dialogues and disseminate material generated through discussions with major stakeholders in the region.

In the APFED II first plenary meeting, it was recommended that prospective topics be evaluated against certain criteria (political binding, relevance to the region, success of outcome, and efficiency) and that existing synergistic linkages between the APFED policy dialogue and on-going and planned regional and sub-regional processes on sustainable development be taken into consideration. Acknowledging these criteria, the Secretariat of APFED organized and conducted two policy dialogues in FY2005, with themes entitled “Access to environmental information” and “The 3Rs”.

Both dialogues were held in parallel with other major conferences in the region, at which a number of policy makers and other stakeholders were present. Opportunities to input results of the dialogues to the related major conferences and subsequent activities for follow-up not only assured that the topics chosen were politically relevant to the region, but also contributed to raising an awareness of APFED activities. Interactions that took place during APFED policy dialogues among representatives from governments, international organizations, civil societies and academia, created fruitful discussions regarding identification of problems and potential recommendations for the region.

The topics for the dialogues were relevant to the on-going discussions relating to the major

environmental policy processes and responsive to the needs in the region: a workshop on access to environmental information addressed the issues of civil society empowerment and an expert meeting on the 3Rs focused on issues arisen from increasing needs for regional recycling. These two dialogues successfully facilitated the process of consensus building and partnership development on the selected topics.

## **2. Summary of the first policy dialogue “Access to Environmental Information”**

The APFED workshop entitled “Workshop on Access to Environmental information in Asia” took place over 23–24 November during the Asia-Europe Environment Forum “1/3 of the Planet” held in Jakarta, Indonesia from 23–25 November 2005. The workshop was scheduled back-to-back to the first APFED II Plenary meeting held in Bogor, Indonesia from 21- 22 November. With such a schedule involving consecutive meetings, APFED members were able to attend both and had fruitful discussions (a report of the Workshop is available).

At the Workshop, APFED members interacted with other participants from governments of Asia and Europe, research institutes, NGOs and international organizations, and the major thrust of discussion points was synthesized in the Co-chairmen’s Summary.

As general points, it was highlighted that “access to information” is a principle essential to the promotion of sustainable development, and consideration was given to the useful role played by the Aarhus Convention in promoting access to information in European countries, along with the Kiev Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers and PRTRs.

With respect to regional collaboration, it was underscored that a regional instrument for harmonizing implementation of principle 10 of the Rio declaration is a desirable objective in Asia. Emphasis was also given to the regional collaboration that should be promoted, in particular, in the areas of capacity development and providing technical assistance, training, awareness-raising and network development for state and non-state stakeholders. In this context, reference was made to the roles that UNESCAP and other international partners such as APFED and WRI could play.

Concerning the partnership among stakeholders, a number of suggestions were made. For example, to promote capacity development of all major stakeholders in promoting the use of environmental information, and voluntary information disclosure by private corporations (e.g. environment management reports, and adoption of ISO 14000). It was also suggested that aid agencies should develop and apply their own policies to also make relevant environmental information available to those residing in recipient countries.

In order to explore the activities proposed by the APFED Workshop on Access to Environmental Information, IGES researchers attended the Access Initiative Global Meeting, which was organized by the WRI and the Thailand Environment Institute (TEI) in Bangkok, from 25 – 27 April 2006. Mr. Masanori Kobayashi, a senior policy researcher at IGES, presented the outcome of the 2005 APFED Workshop, and highlighted the potential collaboration that IGES could pursue within the IGES framework that could include APFED showcase programme activities.

At the workshop, the WRI recommended Bangladesh, who has recently expressed its willingness to participate in the Access Initiative as best suited to act as a partner for IGES in this initiative. The initiative focuses on both access to environmental information, and assessment of the impact of such information on the public as regards attitudes and awareness. The goals are twofold: to create a more environmentally sound and sustainable future, and to improve environmental performance. The Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) is designated as a coordinating organization in Bangladesh to pursue such collaboration. The proposal for undertaking experimental activities on access to environmental information is intended to be submitted to the APFED Showcase Innovation programme.

### **3. Summary of the second policy dialogue “3Rs in Asia”**

The second policy dialogue was held in Tokyo, Japan on 5 March 2006 on the topic of the 3Rs (reduce, reuse, and recycle) as a pre-cursor to the “Senior Officials Meeting on the 3Rs” held on the following two days in Tokyo. In addition to selected APFED members (Prof. Dr. Cielito Habito, Dr. Kim Myung-ja, Prof. Akio Morishima, and Prof. Dr. Tongroj Onchan), a total of 40 experts and representatives, including those from national governments, research institutes, the private sector, NGOs and international organizations, attended the meeting. Extensive discussions took place on the themes of implementation, international cooperation, and promotion of the 3R Initiative in Asia. A summary of the discussions was presented at the Senior Officials’ Meeting by an APFED representative (Dr. Kim Myung-ja).

The Experts Meeting was organized to discuss three issues: (1) Regional initiatives to promote the 3Rs in Asian countries, (2) International initiatives to promote the 3Rs in Asia, and (3) Future challenges to promote the 3Rs in Asia. A discussion paper was prepared by the APFED Secretariat and circulated among the participants prior to the meeting, and the discussions during the meeting were facilitated by co-chairs based on the presentations in each session.

In the session on “Regional initiatives to promote the 3Rs in Asian countries,” the

representatives from eight countries in the region presented their various efforts and their results. While waste generation is still on the rise in many countries, some of them have succeeded in reversing the increasing trend in waste generation and raising the recycling ratio of materials such as paper, bottles and plastics where a domestic recycling capacity is available. Landfills remain problematic in many countries due to limited space and lack of appropriate management, and pose great risks to human health. In general, laws and regulations are in place in many countries, yet a lack of financial as well as institutional capacity often hinders successful implementation of the measures and plans. While the market-based measures have been demonstrating their effectiveness, there still appears to be room for strengthening voluntary action, public-private partnership, and stakeholder involvement in promoting the 3Rs in Asia. In addition, the need for an international framework in dealing with recycled high-tech products such as vehicles and electronic appliances was expressed by participating countries.

In the session on “International initiatives to promote the 3Rs in Asia”, various international agencies and bodies presented their programs and initiatives and emphasized the importance of partnership and collaboration with countries in the region.

In the last session, a number of recommendations were made in promoting the 3Rs. Mainstreaming of the 3R-related policies and coordination across ministries and industries have been identified as important policy measures and a necessary institutional arrangement along with building capacity for the implementation of 3R policies in each country. Also, the importance of addressing both downstream waste management and upstream cleaner production measures was stressed. Market-based approaches can provide effective measures as well as business opportunities. Technological development and the involvement of various stakeholders in policy formulation, as well as implementation, are vital in facilitating the 3Rs. The need for guidelines that promote the harmonization of definitions of “waste” and “recyclables” as well as a system that mainstreams the 3R policies was emphasized.

On the following day, the Senior Officials’ Meeting on the 3R Initiative was held in Tokyo, hosted by the Ministry of the Environment of Japan. Attendees included those from 20 participating countries, the European Commission, eight participating international organizations and networks, including APFED. In the plenary Session, each national delegation made a brief presentation on programmes and progress of the 3Rs, followed by presentations from delegates from each international organization and network. The representative from APFED (Dr. Kim Myung-ja) made a presentation and its contents were noted in the Chair’s Summary as follows:

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There have been several significant achievements in the 3Rs at the national level in Asia, including basic laws, action plans and master plans, market-based measures, institutional capacity development, inter-agency collaboration, voluntary actions, partnership building, and information-based measures. A number of activities and initiatives promoted by international organizations were also underscored as ways for facilitating 3R implementation. Recommendations included the promotion of life-cycle and integrated approaches, concrete numerical target setting, institutional capacity development, the effective use of market-based measures and economic instruments, and international cooperation in various areas, including regional guideline development and regional market formation.

In the Senior Officials' Meeting on the 3R Initiative, the importance of cooperation on the 3Rs at the national, regional, and international levels was emphasized. The effectiveness of bilateral, multilateral, multiregional, as well as north-south and south-south cooperation was also noted. In addition, collaboration/linkage with the business sector and NGOs was stressed for successful implementation of the 3Rs. Participants recognized the need for establishing a system to exchange information on practice examples, both good and bad, and policies and technologies.

#### **4. Plans for FY 2006**

Two topics have been identified, as follows, by the APFED Secretariat in consultation with the Ministry of Environment of Japan for the APFED policy dialogues in FY 2006, with the above-mentioned selection criteria taken into consideration. These topics are expected to add another dimension to the policy dialogues conducted in FY 2005. (i) Corporate social responsibility (CSR) in environmental management will enable APFED to examine the issues from the corporate point of view, in contrast to the focuses given to the workshop on "Access to Environmental Information" where the issue of civil societies' empowerment was addressed. (ii) Chemical management will shed light on the issues in environmental management in the upstream policies, in contrast to the previous focuses given to the 3Rs where issues on downstream policies were mainly discussed.

##### **(1) CSR in environmental management**

As economies expand with the increase in trade volumes and diversification of traded goods, the countries in the region need to be more vigilant on environmental soundness and sustainability of their economies. In this respect, the private sector, particularly corporations and enterprises, faces great challenges and responsibilities as well as various opportunities in leading the global society towards sustainable development. Demand for environmentally-friendly products is increasing, and consequently, many corporations,

particularly multinationals, are making efforts to secure environmental management along their supply chains, which extend into many developing countries in the region. In this respect, issues regarding CSR are relevant to both developed and developing countries. For instance, the disclosure of information on products and production processes, as one of the important issues in CSR, is still deemed limited, and approaches to forging partnerships between the private sector and civil societies vary substantially across the region.

One of the international forums related to CSR is social responsibility (SR) under ISO 26000. ISO 26000 will contain guidelines, not requirements. The contents have been developed since 2001 by representatives of the six main stakeholder groups: industry; government; labor; consumers; nongovernmental organizations; and service, support, research, and others. The second draft will be produced in preparation for the next ISO Working Group on Social Responsibility, which is scheduled to take place in January or February 2007 in Sydney, Australia.<sup>1</sup>

CSR is also discussed in other forums worldwide, such as the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Similar activities are found in regional forums, such as CSR Asia and the Association for Sustainable and Responsible Investment in Asia (ASrIA). ASrIA specialises in the investment activities of investors who take into account various social, economic, and environmental concerns. Conferences and meetings held at these forums are expected to provide APFED with suitable occasions for the policy dialogue.

In FY 2005, IGES organized a multi-stakeholder dialogue on CSR in environmental management with the intellectual input under the sponsorship from the Toyota Motor Corporation, a leading multinational company. Invited were representatives from major corporations, governmental organizations, and civil societies as well as experts who actually participate in the process of ISO 26000. During the dialogue, both the importance of building partnership between corporations and civil societies and the benefits from raising the standards of business practice in developing countries were pointed out. Although the concept of CSR may be relatively new to the region as a whole, it is already incorporated in some business sectors in the region that have strong links with companies from developed countries.

Subjects for the APFED policy dialogue could include (i) environmental management

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<sup>1</sup> "Participating in the future International Standard ISO 26000 on Social Responsibility" published by the ISO Central Secretariat and the "Drafting progresses of future ISO 26000 standard on social responsibility" [<http://www.iso.org/iso/en/commcentre/pressreleases/2006/Ref1010.html>] (Accessed June 2006).

including EMS and design for the environment, (ii) socially responsible investment, (iii) compliance with laws and regulations, (iv) environmental information dissemination, and (v) philanthropic support of communal environmental management. Fruitful discussions in the Asian regional context are expected with participation from a wide range of stakeholders, including those from the private sector. Actual participants and other details of the meeting will be announced when decided upon.

## (2) Chemical management

The APFED I final report states that the production and use of chemicals in the Asia-Pacific region has been substantial, resulting in the accumulation of stockpiles and contamination of the environment, with associated risks to human and animal health. Of particular regional concern is the extensive contamination of water, land, and air with a wide range of inorganic and organic compounds released into the environment from household, industrial, and agricultural activities. The same report was highlighted with the following recommendations: (i) to improve management of chemical hazards, long-term national policies on hazardous chemicals must be introduced by establishing a system that would enable a “cradle-to-cradle” management system of chemicals in each country, and (ii) better management of chemicals would require promotion of “Green Chemistry” for which the R&D capacity needs to be strengthened as a first step. The former calls for a regional collaborative effort in developing a set of model guidelines to address key issues in promoting the safe use, transport, storage, and disposal as well as reuse and recycling of chemicals. In the latter, a regional R&D initiative could be effective in promoting the development of more environmentally benign technologies for the manufacture, use and disposal of chemicals, and the use of renewable biological resources to the greatest extent possible. In both cases, upstream environmental management and collective efforts in the region were emphasized.

In Europe, the introduction of a new regulatory framework on chemicals called “REACH (Registration Evaluation, Authorisation of Chemicals)” is being proposed. REACH aims to improve the protection of human health and the environment through earlier and more accurate identification of the properties of chemical substances and its proposal gives greater responsibility to industry to manage the risks from chemicals and to provide safety information on such substances.<sup>2</sup> The impact of the introduction of REACH is expected to be so extensive that it has drawn considerable attention from various stakeholders in Europe, as well as the rest of the world. For instance, the document prepared for the workshop on REACH organized by the Netherlands states that “REACH can be a technical trade barrier, which gives European manufacturers of chemicals on the EU-market an advantage.

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<sup>2</sup> “REACH” by European Commission. [[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/reach/reach\\_intro.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/reach/reach_intro.htm)] (Accessed June 2006)

Manufacturers outside the EU have an advantage on the markets outside the EU, because they are not affected by REACH. This implies a disadvantage for exporters of chemicals from the EU to markets outside the EU.”<sup>3</sup> However, many manufacturers are actually gearing up towards complying with REACH, even if the opposite appears the case. Amid this transition, the Asia-Europe Environment Forum (ASEF) is planning to organize its fourth roundtable, entitled “Combine or Combust! Co-operating on Chemicals and Hazardous Substances Management”, which is scheduled to take place in Brussels in November. This round table will be co-organized by the ASEF, the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF), the Swedish Environmental Secretariat in Asia (SENSA), UNEP, and IGES, and various speakers and stakeholders in Europe and Asia will be invited. Focuses of the session are yet to be specified, however, this roundtable is considered an excellent opportunity for policy dialog regarding APFED to take place in FY 2006.

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<sup>3</sup> “EU2004REACH: The impact of REACH” prepared for the workshop in 2004 by consultants ECORYS and OpdenKamp Adviesgroep.