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**Achievements of and On-going Efforts for Sustainable Development  
in Asia and the Pacific**

*Achievements and efforts at national level*

- Perceiving the importance of institutional mechanisms (administrative bodies and legal and regulatory frameworks) for governing sustainable development, countries in the Asian and Pacific region have increasingly put their focus on the institutional mechanisms designed to promote a balance between environment and development in recent years. Most governments in the region have set up an independent agency responsible for environmental management. Their environmental agencies are now better equipped with the adequate legal and regulatory powers necessary to conserve natural resources and protect the environment. A framework law for environment protection has been introduced in most countries. Environment impact assessment law has been adopted by almost all countries in the region.
- In most developing countries of the region, there has been a shift from highly centralised governance to decentralised governance in recent years. Administration has been decentralised, national and local decision-making processes integrated, community participation promoted, and NGOs and the private sector increasingly involved in policy-making processes. Under these changes bottom-up decision-making processes in environmental management are being shaped in the region.

*Achievements and efforts at sub-regional levels*

- In a variety of environmental areas, sub-regional/regional initiatives have been taken by sub-regional/regional/international organisations and forums.
- *South Asia:* The South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) started in 1982 and has initiated a number of projects with focus on capacity building and institutional strengthening, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, ecosystems conservation and assessment, environmental information and assessment, and education and awareness-raising. The SACEP South Asian Regional Seas Programme, which is a transboundary environmental programme in South Asia, is a major achievement supported by the SACEP.

- *Southeast Asia:* In this region, a number of achievements have been made under ASOEN (ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment) Strategic Plan for Action on the Environment. The adoption of the Cooperation Plan on Transboundary Pollution in 1995, which facilitated the development of a Regional Haze Action Plan after the 1997 forest fires, is one of a number of achievements by the Plan. The first implementation period of the Plan is 1994-1998. Under the current implementation period (1999-2004), the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution was ratified in June 2002. Another outcome of sub-regional cooperation is the ASEAN Regional Centre for Biodiversity Conservation, which was established in the Philippines in 1999 to coordinate ASEAN initiatives on biodiversity conservation, reflecting serious concerns over biodiversity loss and degradation in the region.
- *Northeast Asia:* As an inter-governmental forum, Northeast Asian Subregional Programme on Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) was initiated by ESCAP in 1993. Its activities primarily focus on capacity building and environmental monitoring. The Tripartite Environment Ministers Meeting (TEMM) was initiated in Seoul in 1999. At its second meeting, TEMM established a basis for substantial cooperation between the three countries: i.e., People's Republic of China, Japan and Republic of Korea.
- *Central Asia:* One of the major environmental cooperation projects in the region is the Caspian Environment Programme (CEP). The CEP was started in 1995, channelled through the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and is the largest water management programme in the world. It was also conceived as a framework for coordinated actions by the Caspian governments towards sustainable environmental management in the region.
- *South Pacific:* Many organisations to advocate sustainable development have been established in this region. The South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), established in 1982 by the governments of the South Pacific countries, has promoted regional cooperation to protect and improve the South Pacific environment. With the help of ESCAP and others, SPREP has assisted small island developing states in capacity building through development of national environment management strategies and legislation on environment. The other example is the establishment of the Forum Fisheries Agency in 1979, which aimed at the conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources.

### *Achievements and efforts at regional level*

- The Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment was adopted at the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in September 2000 with the objective to improve the environment in the urban areas in the region. It is now being implemented.
- Initiatives have been taken in cross-cutting issues as well as a variety of environmental issues. UNDP's Capacity 21 initiative in the Asian and Pacific region has been successful in enabling stakeholders to participate in planning, decision-making and implementation of projects among the on-going initiatives on capacity building.
- A project on Indicators for Sustainable Development (ISD) in Asia and the Pacific was initiated by ESCAP to develop a set of indicators to help identify trends in the promotion of sustainable development and assist the countries in the region to utilise these indicators towards strategic planning for environment and sustainable development. Its major achievements are to have created awareness among decision makers on the use of ISD in the region and to have established methodological approaches suitable to local conditions.
- UNEP's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (UNEP/ROAP) established the initiative called the Network for Environmental Training at Tertiary Level in Asia and the Pacific (NETTLAP) in 1993. NETTLAP aimed to enhance the region's capacity to manage the environment.
- The Environment Congress for Asia and the Pacific (ECO ASIA) was initiated by Japan in 1991 to promote regional cooperation on environmental issues. ECO ASIA, which is one of the leading forums for environmental policy dialogue in Asian and the Pacific region, initiated the ECO ASIA Long-term Perspective Project aimed to provide decision-makers in the region with a scientific basis for policy formulation to support the process of sustainable development. ECO ASIA also proposed the establishment of the Environmental Information Network for Asia and the Pacific (ECO ASIA NET).
- The Phnom Penh Regional Platform on Sustainable Development for Asia and the Pacific adopted at the High-level Regional Meeting for the World Summit on Sustainable Development in November 2001 identified the following seven initiatives for follow-up action:

- Capacity-building for sustainable development
- Poverty reduction for sustainable development
- Cleaner production and sustainable energy
- Land management and biodiversity conservation
- Protection and management of and access to freshwater resources
- Oceans, coastal and marine resources and sustainable development of small island developing States
- Action on atmosphere and climate change

#### ***Achievements and efforts by NGOs***

- There is evidence of increased networking of NGOs and other major groups at the regional level to share experiences, influence discussions of regional and international bodies, and raise concerns over the globalisation process. Active regional NGOs working on sustainable development include the Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD) and the Asian Alliance of Appropriate Technology Practitioners (APPROTECH ASIA). The Third World Network (TWN) based in Malaysia is especially working on issues related to trade liberalisation and globalisation. Sustainable Transport Action Network for Asia and the Pacific (SUSTRANS) is dedicated to promoting transport policies that foster socially just and ecologically sustainable mobility.

#### ***Achievements and efforts by business***

- The role of business and industry in promoting sustainable development in the region has enhanced with globalisation and trade liberalisation. The private sector is contributing to eco-business, cleaner production, and environmental research and development. Participation of the private sector in waste management, water supply and sanitation, energy planning and development either directly or through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) is also growing. Private companies are taking steps to improve their environmental performance through the employment of environmental management tools such as EIA and environmental auditing, the adoption of the ISO 14000 environmental management standard, and the establishment of eco-labelling in certain markets. However, a total of less than five per cent of the region's investment in pollution control is provided by the private sector. Weak environmental monitoring and enforcement of existing standards and the lack of green consumerism are raised as two major constraints to "greening" the private sector, particularly in the developing countries of the region.