

United Nations Environment Programme Asia and the Pacific Office

Second Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific Bangkok, 5-8 September 2017

Discussion Document for Agenda Item 16:

Adoption of the outcomes of the second United Nations Environment Programme Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific (member States primarily served by the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific)

Chair's summary of the second United Nations Environment Programme Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific

I. Overview

1. The United Nations Environment Programme and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, co-organized and coordinated the Asia Pacific Ministerial Summit on the Environment bringing together the United Nations Environment Programme's Second Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific's seventh Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific from 5-8 September in Bangkok Thailand. The Ministerial Summit focused on addressing the linkages between resource efficiency and pollution reduction in Asia and the Pacific, under the theme 'Towards a resource efficient and pollution free Asia-Pacific'. The meeting was attended by the following countries served by the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific: Afghanistan; Australia; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; Cook Islands; Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Fiji; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kiribati; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Maldives; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; New Zealand; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Samoa; Singapore; Solomon Islands; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Tonga; Vanuatu; and Viet Nam. Participants included 23 Ministers, along with other senior officials of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations organizations, and representatives of civil society groups.

2. The second United Nations Environment Programme's Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific comprised of a Senior Officials Segment 6 September and Ministerial segment from 7-8 September.

3. The objectives of the Forum were to discuss:

- Progress in the region in implementing resolutions and decisions adopted at the first and second sessions of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme; and identification of regional priorities for the third United Nations Environment Assembly (2017).
- Pressing challenges regarding a transition towards a resource efficient and pollution free Asia and the Pacific Region.
- Institutional arrangements for the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific.

II. Opening of the session

4. Agenda item 12 (a) the Opening of the session, was presided over by H.E. Mr. U Ohn Winn, Union Minister, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation.

5. General Surasak Karnjanarat, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Thailand made welcome remarks highlighting Thailand's progress towards sustainable development including through the National Committee on Sustainable Development chaired by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha. Thailand's role as a member of the global community includes engaging in international agreements and commitments.

6. Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific made welcome remarks noting that the meeting was climate neutral. Focus areas for action were highlighted including policy coherence and consistency, resource efficiency, sustainable finance, and gender responsive policy and programmes.

7. Mr. Erik Solheim, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme made welcome remarks. The one UN approach to the organization of the meeting was welcomed. The massive impact of pollution on health was highlighted as well as positive steps taken by countries across the region to address challenges of pollution and sustainable development. Need for action in three areas was emphasized including citizens that advocates for action against pollution, governments demonstrating political leadership, and business driving technological change and innovation.

8. Under agenda item 12 (b) on the Election of Officers, the Forum elected the following Bureau members:

- a. Chair: H.E. Mr. Masagos Zulkifli, Minister of the Environment and Water Resources, Singapore
- b. Vice-Chair: H.E Mr. Lyonpo Yeshey Dorji, Minister of Agriculture and Forests, Bhutan
- c. Vice-Chair: Hon. Lorna Eden, Assistant Minister for Local Government, Housing and Environment, Fiji

9. Under agenda item 12 (c) Adoption of the agenda, the Forum adopted the following agenda:

- Opening of the session:
 - a. Opening addresses;
 - b. Election of officers;
 - c. Adoption of the agenda.
- Ministerial dialogue: “Towards a resource-efficient and pollution-free Asia-Pacific region”.
- Matters pertaining to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific:
 - a. Policy perspectives on the environment and development in Asia and the Pacific;
 - b. Consideration of the report of the senior officials of the seventh Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific;
- Matters pertaining to the second United Nations Environment Programme Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific (member States primarily served by the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific):
 - a. Review of the first United Nations Environment Programme Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific and recommendations of the second Forum;
 - b. Regional input to the draft declaration of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its third session (2017);
 - c. Policy perspectives on a pollution-free planet.
- Adoption of the outcomes of the second United Nations Environment Programme Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific (member States primarily served by the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific).
- Adoption of the Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development for Asia and the Pacific and of the report of the seventh Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific.
- Closing of the Summit.

III. Ministerial dialogue: “Towards a resource-efficient and pollution-free Asia-Pacific region”.

10. Under agenda item 13, the meeting benefited from a ministerial panel discussing measures towards achieving a resource-efficient and pollution-free Asia-Pacific region. The Panel was

moderated by Mr. Ashok Khosla, President, Development Alternatives and member of the International Resource Panel. The session's Ministerial Panel and open discussion included the following issues and priorities for the region:

- Pollution Free Asia and the Pacific is achievable, as the region has overcome even bigger challenges related to public health and the poverty in the past.
- The leadership of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the United Nations Environment Programme in facilitating regional cooperation on transboundary pollution, the international exchange of best practices among national, sub-national, and local governments on innovative solutions for the challenges of rapid urbanization and its associated use of resources and generation of pollution, and national capacity building for the integrated implementation of sustainable development goals.
- The panel discussion stressed the usefulness of inter-ministerial dialogue and cooperation towards mainstreaming environmental sustainability in national, sub-national, and local developmental plans.
- The importance of an inclusive green economy that leaves no one behind was emphasized.
- Curbing transboundary pollution such as Haze in Southeast Asia as well as sand and dust storms, and marine plastic litter requires stronger regional cooperation.
- The importance of enhancing public awareness, participation, and partnerships toward resource efficient and environmentally sustainable practices such as 3R (reduce, reuse, recycle) approaches, was also emphasized.
- The specific challenges facing small islands developing states were highlighted including sea level rise due to climate change, waste management, and mercury entering diets through fish, marine plastic pollution
- The United Nations Environment Programme's clean seas global campaign on marine litter was welcomed as a tool to fight pollution.
- The importance of engaging citizens to raise awareness on and address the region's environmental challenges was emphasized.
- The importance of creating reliable public-private alliances for attaining resource efficient and pollution free societies was also noted.
- It was noted that establishing mechanisms in government to assess the implications of new policy and technologies can help to identify costs and benefits of action.

IV. Matters pertaining to the second United Nations Environment Programme Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific (member States primarily served by the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific).

V. Review of the first United Nations Environment Programme Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific and recommendations of the second Forum

11. Under agenda item 15 (a), Mr. Suho Seong, Vice Chair of the Bureau to the meeting senior officials meeting and Director of International Cooperation Division, Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea, presented a report on the senior official's segment. The report and discussion identified the following issues and priorities for the region:

Review of implementation in Asia and the Pacific of the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly at its second session, in 2016, and discussion of regional priorities for the United Nations Environment Programme in Asia and the Pacific

- The presentation on the report on the senior official's segment under agenda item 7 on progress in the region in the implementation of the first and second UN Environment Assembly resolutions welcomed progress made in implementation of the resolutions. The senior officials meeting identified the following regional priorities for the United Nations Environment Programme in Asia and the Pacific including: 1) Responding to environmental health risks associated with pollution; 2) Protecting natural capital and ecosystem integrity including wildlife, biodiversity and oceans; 3) Decoupling resource use from economic growth; 4) Strengthening environmental cooperation; 5) Strengthening environmental governance and institutions; 6) Strengthening scientific-basis of policy-making and knowledge sharing.
- Additional regional priorities for the UN Environment Programme discussed in Ministerial segment of the Forum included:
 - Need to promote sustainable consumption and production and resource efficiency to combat pollution.
 - Need enhanced environmental cooperation at regional and national level including through Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Greater Mekong Sub-region, Asian Development Bank's Core Environment Programme
 - Marine debris and plastics pollution.
 - Sound management of chemicals and waste in context of rapid industrialization as a means for pollution reduction.
 - Need for recognition that poverty can drive environmental degradation and is an issue to be taken into account.
 - Sustainable development goals and green economic principles provide a framework for action.
 - Support capacity building for the implementation of environmental laws, regulations, policies and plans.

Draft resolutions of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its third session

- H.E. Mr. Raza Bashir Tarar, Vice Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Pakistan introduced the draft resolutions. Written comments on the resolutions are to be submitted by 22 September. The Open -ended Committee of Permanent Representatives meeting from 29 November -1 December will compile the resolutions for submission to the United Nations Environment Assembly. The presentation on the report on the senior official's segment under agenda item 8 (b) on draft resolutions of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its third session noted the issues below.

A. Draft Resolution on Marine Litter and Microplastics (proposed by Norway)

12. Need to address litter/(micro)plastics as a high priority was noted due to the impact on livelihoods and toxic material from plastics entering the food chain through fish. Scientific data and information gaps were emphasized including on micro plastics monitoring.

B. Draft Resolution on Eliminating Exposure to Lead Paints (proposed by the United States of America)

13. Welcomed and noted that cross ministerial cooperation was needed to address this issue as well as engagement with private sector.

C. Concept note on a Resolution on the Environment and Health Nexus (proposed by the EU)

14. Environmental health strategies at national and regional levels. “One health” approaches need to be examined from the environmental perspective since normally this concept was used by health not environmental authorities. PM10 and PM2.5 impact on human health. Strengthen intergovernmental cooperation to address transboundary pollution given the environmental health risks. Promoting sustainable production and consumption action key to reducing pollution at sources.

D. Draft Resolution calling for the Synchronization of objectives and activities, especially the conduct of meetings of the conferences of the parties/ governing bodies of multilateral environmental agreements and protocols for efficient implementation and monitoring of the agenda 2030 and for cost reduction and effective participation of UN member states (proposed by the Philippines)

15. Member states were encouraged to provide feedback to the Philippines or through UN Environment Programme.

E. Draft Resolution to Improve Air Quality in Cities (proposed by Sudan)

16. Template plans could be developed and adapted for use in developing national and regional plans to combat air pollution. Improve air quality monitoring and assessment. Strengthen air quality policies and strategies (at the sub-national, national, or regional level).

Institutional arrangements for the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific

- The presentation on the report on the senior official’s segment included the text of the senior officials report under Agenda item 9 on institutional arrangements: Forum invited comments on a Background Note on Institutional Arrangements for the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific including senior officials. It was noted that this Forum is organized in response to UN Environment Assembly Resolution 2/2 on the Role and Functions of the Regional Forums of Ministers of Environment and Environment Authorities. As proposed in the note, the future meetings of the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities will be invited to adopt UN Environment Assembly rules of procedure to apply mutatis mutandis and as appropriate to its meetings. One country noted the importance of a consensus approach to the running of the Forum.
- Additional issues discussed in the Ministerial segment included:
 - It was noted that the Forum serves an important role as a platform for discussion and identifying priorities. One country noted that the Forum is not a decision-making body and that a consensus based approach should be used by the Forum. It was noted that the UN Environment Assembly rules and procedures may not be appropriate for this Forum.

Inputs from Civil Society Groups

- The presentation on the report on the senior official’s segment noted issues raised by civil society groups in the senior officials meeting.

17. Additional inputs made by civil society groups and partners during the Ministerial segment of the Forum included:

- The generation of green and decent jobs is a priority and these workers can form the basis for a green and decent society. Need to invest in occupational environmental health and safety to avoid work related injuries and illnesses. Governments are encouraged to give whistle blower protection to workers who report environmental violations.

- Need to ensure that most vulnerable and marginalized can address their basic needs including use of clean air, water, soil.
- Called for increased engagement between governments and civil society including through provision of meaningful space for this including through participation in official programmes and establishing mechanisms for participation by stakeholders.
- 61 environmental defenders had been killed in the region.
- A Green economy approach was questioned in that it could result in 'green washing'.
- Public private partnerships must ensure that they don't result in negative impacts on communities or their natural environments.
- Call for the assessment of new technologies in the region to assess potential impacts.
- Need to ensure the role of women in addressing pollution to be recognized. The impacts of soil and water pollution also disproportionately affect women.
- International Labour Organization noted the need to identify and share good practices across the region in addressing pollution including as related to private sector and entrepreneurs. A co-benefit of tackling pollution is job creation.

VI. Regional input to the draft declaration of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its third session (2017)

18. Under agenda item 15 (b), a video message was presented from H.E. Mr. Edgar Gutiérrez, President of the United Nations Environment Assembly. H.E. Mr. Raza Bashir Tarar, Vice Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Pakistan introduced the draft declaration of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its third session (2017). The presentation on the report on the senior official's segment noted the following issues under Agenda item 8 (c) on the draft declaration of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its third session:

- Some common environment and development principles should be included such as those related to common but differentiated responsibilities, technology transfers, and financial assistance.
- Some noted a Declaration, rather than a Chairs summary, was intensive to agree on but Declaration does demonstrate collective commitment by member states.
- Paragraphs 1,3,5 contain figures with no references.
- Focus on progress achieved so far to provide a more positive perspective. Declaration refers to specific cases and regions which may not be appropriate for a Declaration.
- Strengthen intergovernmental cooperation at all levels to address and reduce the negative impacts of transboundary forms of pollution.
- UN Environment Assembly's role as a platform for harmonizing and coordinating global action on pollution.
- Drawing on traditional knowledge was emphasized.

19. Additional issues and priorities on the Declaration discussed during the Ministerial segment included:

- It was noted that a chairs summary could be a more appropriate document than a Declaration as it is more action orientated. On the other hand it was also noted that a Declaration can help drive commitment and action.
- In Paragraph 1 of the Declaration the format does not follow regular practice and could give a negative message to the public. It was proposed to open the Declaration by summarizing progress made followed by emerging challenges and then action to take.
- Recommended to specify the meaning of 'pollution free'. The concept of risk management should also be clearly stated.

- Recommended to include awareness raising and knowledge sharing under paragraph 5 as well as the importance of consultations with relevant groups to combat pollution.
- Support to reuse, recycling and sound management of chemicals and waste could be included under the third and fourth bullet points of paragraph 5.
- It is difficult to judge if the examples in paragraph 1 are correct or not. Paragraphs 3 and 5 contain data but lack references.
- Environment and development principles adopted in the Rio Declaration and elsewhere should be addressed in the Declaration including equity, common but differentiated responsibilities, technology transfers, and provision of adequate financial assistance.
- It was noted that the UN Environment Assembly President in his video presentation to the Forum referred to the Declaration as a negotiated outcome document but there was a question as to whether this was the case. It was noted that there may not be time for a prolonged negotiation at the UN Environment Assembly. On the other hand, it was noted a political Declaration was worth negotiating if it is concise, action orientated, meaningful and address issues related to people's every-day lives.

VII. Policy perspectives on a pollution-free planet.

20. Under agenda item 15 (c), the meeting benefited from a ministerial panel discussing policy perspectives on a pollution-free planet. The panel was moderated by H.E. Dr. Ramon J.P.Paje, Vice President for Asia and the Pacific, United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme. The session's panel and open discussion on policy perspectives on a pollution-free planet identified the following issues and priorities:

- Good practices from across the region were highlighted related to waste management; air quality including cap and trade regimes; national plastic bag standard; a '4 Rs' approach including 'return' was emphasized such as action to promote waste to energy initiatives by local governments; promote more sustainable consumption patterns by consumers including through schools; agro-ecology and organic farming; converting textile waste into bags and give to retail outlets; pay as you go solar power for households.
- Key challenges were identified including: addressing land based sources of marine litter, including from rivers; need to develop alternative options to plastics; balancing action on pollution with economic development including pollution from industrial fishing and mining which generate significant economic benefits; finding alternative sources of power following the phasing out of nuclear power.
- The need for coordinated international approaches to monitoring air pollution was highlighted. At the national level platforms to engage all relevant partners to address pollution and waste were encouraged.
- The importance of mainstreaming environment in national and local government planning and decision-making processes was emphasized.
- Need for increased capacity to monitor waste and pollution including related to chemicals and waste and transfer of relevant technologies.
- The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme's Cleaner Pacific 2025: Pacific Regional Waste and Pollution Management Strategy was highlighted as a framework for action on pollution in the Pacific.
- UN Environment was requested to develop memorandums of understanding with relevant organizations to support implementation of the UN Environment Assembly resolution on the role, functions and modalities for UNEP implementation of the SAMOA Pathway as a means of facilitating achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Noted that the establishing of the UN Environment Programme

Pacific Office for helped to facilitate partnerships in the region and should be further strengthened.

- Working with the private sector is an important part of addressing pollution, including engaging banks in the Green Climate Fund to mobilize and increase the flow of green finance through banking sector and to scale up renewable energy. The need to regulate private sector including an example of linking companies' environmental pollution impacts to access to bank lending was highlighted. Environmental economic instruments are important tools to fight pollution including a) planning to internalize externalizes into planning, b) to provide funds for environmental protection activities and 3) to provide incentives for action including soft loans to stimulate adoption of clean technologies and payment for ecological services, debt for nature swaps. An example of a national sustainable finance roadmap was highlighted as an effective tool for engaging the private sector in addressing environmental challenges.
- National environment funds could be established to fund action on pollution.
- There is a need to promote access to information by communities and civil society groups to support decision making and monitoring of pollution. This includes ensuring that data is user friendly.

VIII. Adoption of the outcomes of the second United Nations Environment Programme Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific (member States primarily served by the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific).

21. Under agenda item 16, the Forum endorsed the report of the senior officials of the second United Nations Environment Programme Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific (UNEP/APEnvForum(2)/6) and this chair's summary of the second United Nations Environment Programme Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific (UNEP/APEnvForum(2)/7).

VIV. Conclusion

22. The second Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia and the Pacific reviewed progress in the implementation of resolutions from the first and second sessions of the United Nations Environment Assembly and identified regional inputs to the outcomes of the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly. The Forum also reviewed institutional arrangements for the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific.
23. The Chair's Summary and report of the senior officials of the second United Nations Environment Programme Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific would be communicated to the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly and its preparatory processes and other relevant forums, including the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development.
24. The Forum thanked the Royal Thai Government for their support to the meeting.



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Second Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific Bangkok, 5-8 September 2017

Discussion Document for Agenda Item 10:

Adoption of the draft outcomes of the second Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific (member States primarily served by the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific).

Report of the senior officials of the second United Nations Environment Programme Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific

Discussion Document -- Not for quotation or citation. The purpose of this document is to facilitate discussions during the Second Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific, 5 – 8 September 2017, Bangkok. Comments are welcome and should be sent to uneproap@un.org.

I. Overview

1. The United Nations Environment Programme and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, co-organized and coordinated the Asia Pacific Ministerial Summit on the Environment bringing together the United Nations Environment Programme's Second Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific's seventh Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific from 5-8 September in Bangkok Thailand. The Ministerial Summit focused on addressing the linkages between resource efficiency and pollution reduction in Asia and the Pacific, under the theme 'Towards a resource efficient and pollution free Asia-Pacific'. The meeting was attended by the following countries served by the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific: Afghanistan; Australia; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; Cook Islands; Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Fiji; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kiribati; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Maldives; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; New Zealand; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Samoa; Singapore; Solomon Islands; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Tonga; Vanuatu; and Viet Nam. Participants included senior officials of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations organizations, and representatives of civil society groups.

2. The second United Nations Environment Programme's Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific comprised of a Senior Officials Segment 6 September and Ministerial segment from 7-8 September.

3. The objectives of the Forum were to discuss:

- Progress in the region in implementing resolutions and decisions adopted at the first and second sessions of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme; and identification of regional priorities for the third United Nations Environment Assembly (2017).
- Pressing challenges regarding a transition towards a resource efficient and pollution free Asia and the Pacific Region.
- Institutional arrangements for the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific.

II. Opening of the senior official's segment of the second Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific (member States primarily served by the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific)

4. Under agenda item 6 (a) opening addresses, the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Director and Representative for Asia and the Pacific, Ms. Dechen Tsering and the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand, Dr. Wijarn Simachaya, made welcome remarks. The opening session was presided over by Dr. Wijarn Simachaya.

5. The Vice President for Asia and the Pacific, United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme, H.E. Dr. Ramon J. P. Paje, gave the inaugural address.

6. Under agenda item 6 (b) on Election of Officers, the Senior Officials elected the following Bureau members:

- a. Chair: H.E. Mr. Taefu Lemi, Associate Ministers, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Samoa
- b. Vice-Chair: Mr. Syed Abu Ahmad Akif, Federal Secretary. Ministry of Climate Change, Pakistan
- c. Vice-Chair: Mr. Suho Seong, Director of International Cooperation Division Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea

7. Under agenda item 6 (c) Adoption of the agenda, the Senior Officials adopted the following agenda:

- Opening of the Forum:
 - a. Opening addresses;
 - b. Election of officers;
 - c. Adoption of the agenda
- Review of implementation in Asia and the Pacific of the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly at its second session, in 2016, and discussion of regional priorities for the United Nations Environment Programme in Asia and the Pacific.
- Regional input to outcomes of the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (2017): (a) Theme: "Towards a pollution-free planet"; (b) Draft resolutions of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its third session; (c) Draft declaration of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its third session.
- Discussion regarding institutional arrangements for the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific.
- Adoption of the draft outcomes of the second Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific (member States primarily served by the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific).

III. Review of implementation in Asia and the Pacific of the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly at its second session, in 2016, and discussion of regional priorities for the United Nations Environment Programme in Asia and the Pacific.

8. Under agenda item 7, the Secretariat presented progress in the region in the implementation of the first and second UN Environment Assembly resolutions and decisions. The presentation also included a number of issues and priorities for the region, based on the findings of the sixth Global Environment Outlook Regional Assessment for Asia and the Pacific, for discussion by the Senior Officials, and a roadmap for promoting regional priorities at the third UN Environment Assembly.

9. It was noted that United Nations Environment Programme is the procedurally correct name for the Programme.

10. The Session reviewed progress in the implementation of the resolutions and decisions at the first and second sessions of the United Nations Environment Assembly. A number of regional priorities and issues for the United Nations Environment Programme were discussed and highlighted. They include the following:

A. Respond to environmental health risks associated with pollution.

11. Widespread pollution and the impacts of extreme environmental events are root causes of disease burden especially among lower economic strata and women. There is widespread risk of environmentally induced mortality and morbidity from indoor and urban air pollution, drinking water contamination, poor sanitation, and vector-borne diseases. To reduce pollution requires both regulatory and economic approaches to accelerate needed energy and resource efficiencies, to promote renewable energy and develop sustainable transportation infrastructure to achieve lower emission. It was recommended that the United Nations Environment Programme support countries in the following areas:

- Establishment and enforcement of air and water quality standards, environmental, climate and disaster related responses, and integrated vector management as critical policy responses for the region.
- Development of national, regional waste management strategies and plans including to address waste in context of rapid urbanization.
- Promote regional dialogue, cooperation and action through regional platforms for action on pollution including the Regional Ministerial Forum on Environment and Health in Southeast and Northeast Asia was welcomed as a forum for action on integrated approaches to addressing environment and health and the Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership (APCAP).
- Engage private sector in addressing pollution including through public private partnerships and addressing specific waste issues such as recycling
- Implementation of Minamata Convention on Mercury.
- Ecosystems and impact of pollution
- Build capacity to on the collection and application of data on pollution including to identify sources, develop mitigation action plans, and monitor progress in pollution reduction.

B. Protect natural capital and ecosystem integrity including wildlife, biodiversity and oceans

12. The Asia and Pacific region has some of the most diverse and rich ecosystems in the world, which support humanity with food, livelihoods, services such as flood protection and water purification, and income and development opportunities. However, population growth, rapid industrialization and urbanization are exerting pressures on the region's natural resource base, and the environmental, social and economic costs of declines in natural capital are increasing. Protecting ecosystems and maintaining natural capital is of particular importance for indigenous groups and rural communities in the region, who are dependent on services and materials provided by nature for their livelihoods. It was recommended that the United Nations Environment Programme support countries in the following areas:

- The engagement of local communities, drawing on their local knowledge, in the protection and management of natural habitats and protected areas which has been demonstrated to strengthen resource protection. This includes through conservation efforts that support sustainable development such as marine parks that promote sustainable fishing, tourism, and deep sea mining.
- Strengthen existing oceans governance including through Coordinating body on the Seas of East Asia including to action to address marine litter from land based pollution sources.
- Sustainable management of coral reefs.

- Addressing illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products including through international coordination which is critical to addressing wildlife crime.
- Addressing dust and sand storms challenges and responses including formulation of a regional plans of action.

C. Decouple resource use from economic growth.

13. There have been successes in some countries in achieving decoupling growth from resource use but not the region as a whole. Cities in particular require significant natural resources, energy, raw materials, food and goods to sustain the daily life of their inhabitants and their economic activities. Around three quarters of the world's natural resources are consumed in cities. The decoupling of city-based economic growth rates from the unsustainable increases in consumption of finite natural resources will help cities to reap major economic benefits. The prices of depleting natural resources continue to rise; hence, it becomes necessary to reconfigure urban consumption and production in ways that ensures sustainable development with available resources. Decoupling would require reforms in procurement, production and supply chains, and consumer behavior; and the involvement of investors, producers, consumers and the Governments to drive the reforms.

14. It was recommended that the United Nations Environment Programme support countries in the following areas:

- SCP strategies, action plans, policies and institutions and coordination across government and mainstream SCP into sector al plans.
- Sustainable financing as a means to switch to more sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- National policies and incentives to encourage businesses to reduce the use of raw materials and energy, and reduce waste and pollution by making systemic changes in their production and supply chains based on technology solutions, life cycle approach and 3Rs/4Rs, and eco-innovations.
- Green public procurement
- Address issue of food waste including through awareness raising.
- Engagement of private sector as a means to promote resource efficiency in support of sustainable consumption and production.
- Promote and apply life cycle thinking to address SCP

D. Strengthen environmental cooperation.

15. The region has established many intergovernmental mechanisms and voluntary partnerships for environmental cooperation at regional and subregional levels, particularly to address transboundary issues. In terms of functionality, they can be broadly categorized as (i) networks that engaged in monitoring, knowledge sharing, assessment and research; and (ii) platforms that support coordinated policy, international law and management responses. Thematically, these mechanisms cover a wide range such as air quality, haze pollution, dust storm, marine resources, marine pollution, seas, corals, forests, wildlife trade, chemicals, waste, water and water pollution among others. Asia-Pacific countries are also parties to many global Multilateral Environmental Agreements, but their implementation at the national level has sometimes been insufficient due to limited capacity. It was recommended that the United Nations Environment Programme support countries in the following areas:

- Facilitate and encourage countries and other partners strong commitment and active participation in regional environmental cooperation mechanisms, partnerships, and policy-programmes by the parties.
- Development and enforcement of national legislation and programmes to implement obligations and ensure compliance under the Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other environmental commitments.
- Need to strengthen cooperation between UN environment and ESCAP and also other relevant international entities including to reduce duplication.
- The implementation of multi-lateral environmental agreements provides an entry point for coordinating support by development partners.
- Strengthen south south and triangular cooperation to be strengthened including to address plastic waste.
- Support implementation of the environmental dimension of the SDGs through an integrated approach including support to development of SDG roadmaps for implementation.

E. Strengthen environmental governance and institutions.

16. Implementation of national commitments under Multilateral Environmental Agreements and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals requires clear and coherent policies and laws transparently implemented and enforced by strong and mandated institutions. Furthermore, environmental governance is sometimes fragmented or not integrated in national and local administrations as they are organized by sectors, which can weaken environmental performance. The Sustainable Development Goals provide an unprecedented opportunity to remedy this situation as they bring together environment and development. This prospect should be seized by countries to develop and strengthen ways to position, finance, organize and strengthen environmental governance at the national and local levels. The private sector also has a huge stake in environmental issues both as a consumer of natural capital, a polluter and a source of finance, innovation and technology. It was recommended that the United Nations Environment Programme support countries in the following areas:

- Integrated environmental governance in political leadership, across ministries, and between national and local Governments. This includes Laws, regulations and policies to create the institutional and legal architecture needed to implement relevant goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Key priorities include, but are not limited to, laws and regulations relevant to climate, wildlife, and pollution.
- Engagement of the private sector including through clear and fair regulatory environments to facilitate private investment into low-carbon and climate resilient development.

F. Strengthen scientific-basis of policy-making and knowledge sharing.

17. Achieving sustainable development is contingent upon development policy and planning guided by scientific knowledge and understanding of the complex relationship between economic activities and environmental issues. To build such knowledge, elements of it should include current environmental state and impact, drivers of environmental change and interaction, and foreseen environmental risks and opportunities. There is growing awareness and interest among public about environmental quality and health impacts, which provides an opportunity to promote participatory

processes and enlist the broader support of civil society and public to advance the environmental agenda. It was recommended that the United Nations Environment Programme support countries in the following areas:

- The Global Environmental Outlook 6 Asia Pacific chapter was welcomed and there was a call for increased focus on environment and health in Outlook reports.
- Developing and applying credible and reliable environmental data to identify emerging environmental challenges support of monitoring and reporting the environment related sustainable development goal.
- Platforms that bring together the Government, and business, academia and civil society, to seek environmental solutions through dialogue and consensus building. Could include exploring potential for establishing a scientific panel with members from all Asia Pacific sub regions as a think tank to review environmental data and identify emerging issues.

G. Processes and mechanisms for promoting Asia Pacific priorities in 2017 United Nations Environment Assembly

18. The outcome of the 2017 United Nations Environment Assembly, Nairobi, Kenya, from 4 to 6 December 2017 will include the following: A political declaration on pollution; resolutions and decisions; voluntary commitments by Governments, private sector entities and civil society organizations to clean up the planet; The Clean Planet Pledge, a collection of individual commitments to take personal action to end pollution in all its forms. In the lead up to 2017 United Nations Environment Assembly, important timeline and events are the following:

- 22 September: Second deadline for Member States to submit draft resolutions to the Secretariat.
- September – October: Informal consultations with regional and political groups, including the Committee of Permanent Representatives in Nairobi
- 10 October: 140th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to send off draft resolutions to 3rd meeting of the open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives.
- 29 November - 1 December: The Committee of Permanent Representatives will hold its third open-ended meeting.
- 2-3 December: Civil society will host the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum, which facilitates the participation of civil society in the Environment Assembly and associated meetings.
- 2-3 December: The Science Policy Forum will engage policymakers, scientists, researchers, and civil society stakeholders in a discussion on the science required to deliver on the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

19. The Civil Society Statement was submitted at the Forum calling for effective and meaningful civil society engagement in the Forum. Civil society groups recommended the following:

- Increasing attention on water scarcity and water pollution as threats to populations. Addressing water pollution as caused by agricultural and industrial sectors. as a threat to the population.
- Promoting traditional knowledge to address pollution and avoid technologies that have a negative impact on the environment including fertilizers, pesticides and Genetically modified products.

- Realigning policies and priorities to people's needs and ensure that no one is left behind.

IV. Regional input to outcomes of the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (2017)

20. Under agenda item 8 (a) on the Theme 'Towards a pollution-free planet'. The Secretariat presented the theme of the United Nations Environment Assembly (2017): Towards a Pollution Free Asia Pacific and Planet. A number of issues and priorities were identified for consideration at United Nations Environment Assembly (2017) on this theme. They include the following:

- Recognition that the oceans are valuable resources generating an estimated 3-6 trillion USD per year. Ocean pollution and development can be addressed through integrated approaches such as the blue economy approach. UN Convention on the law of the sea provides a scientific basis for consideration of ocean issues.
- Need to build capacity on waste data and monitoring including to identify pollution hotspots that can then be prioritized for action.
- Need to develop and implement policies and programmes to decouple economic activities from current levels of pollution drawing on good practices from across the region.
- Strengthen environmental institutions and governance for the enforcement of environment laws, scientific assessments and integrated environmental sustainability policy responses
- El Nino cycles can exacerbate pollution.
- There is a need to increase awareness of consumers and the general population on green living and life cycle approaches.
- Need to strengthen science and open data and information to better guide evidence-based decision making and system-oriented actions
- Importance of developing and strengthening specific national action plans to address air, water, soil pollution was emphasized as a good model for action. In addition, Region specific plan to address pollution could be a way to address this issue and identify capacity development needs. A template plan framework could be developed to support regional and national plans.
- Intergovernmental environmental cooperation and information sharing can help to address transboundary forms of pollution.
- Call for increased attention on environmental health when addressing challenge of pollution.
- A 4 Rs approach was noted that focuses on reduce, refuse, reuse and recycle. Addition of 'refuse' recognizes that governments can lead by example through green public procurement.
- Platforms that bring together government, private sector and CSO can help to coordinate action on pollution.
- Need to also include issue of electronic waste to support Basel convention, including through promoting a life cycle approach.
- Dietary exposure mercury and toxic additives in plastics that enter the food chain through fish is an issue. Particularly issue in this region given dependence on fish in diets.

- Need to create public awareness and greater understanding of the costs of pollution and benefits of lifestyle changes and consumer choices (active citizen engagement and increased role of non-state actors)
- Pollution quality standards in each country will be different according to local circumstances and priorities.
- Further coordination and coherence among the relevant multi-lateral environmental agreements can strengthen action on pollution.
- Challenges and gaps limit the effectiveness of actions to combat pollution. These center on availability of data and information, existing infrastructure, institutional and technical capacity, business and industry leadership, mispricing and invisibility of ecosystem values, and consumer behaviors.
- The Sustainable Development Goal 3 on health and well-being Target 3.9 commits to “substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination” provides an opportunity to both accelerate pollution action, but also through actions on pollution to achieve other Goals.
- including through engaging the private sector, including finance sector, and building on existing strategic partnerships and networks such as Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint, Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles; Global Soil Partnership;
- It was requested necessary revision be made to paragraph 15 Section 1 and 2 in the background document UNEP/APENVFORUM(2)/2 Page 6 in order to ensure that countries are able to set their own air quality guidelines and standards using the World Health Organisation air quality guidelines as reference.

21. Civil society groups noted the following:

- Welcomed the CSO Forum on Environment of Asia Pacific organized by UN Environment and UN economic and social commission for Asia Pacific back to back with this Forum.
- Need for increased participation in the official programme of the Forum. CSOs have a role to play to link governments and communities.
- Action to address issue of pollution should include holding chemical companies to account for pollution, promoting sustainable agriculture, establishing more green schools, colleges and institutions for children and youth, promoting agro-ecology and organic farming.

22. Under agenda item 8 (b) on the ‘Draft resolutions of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its third session’. H.E. Mr. Raza Bashir Tarar, Vice Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Pakistan introduced the draft resolutions of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its third session. Member states from the region were encouraged to submit more resolutions for future sessions of the UN Environment Assembly. It was noted that member states can submit resolutions related to the theme of a pollution free planet for consideration at the UN environment assembly third session by September 22. A general discussion took place on the draft resolutions to seek regional inputs (noting that discussion did not take place resolution by resolution) and it was noted that the resolutions were not presented in full in this meeting. The Secretariat noted that all resolutions had been circulated to member states by the UN Environment Programme Secretariat of the governing bodies. The discussion points were grouped by the Secretariat in relation to the resolutions for ease of presentation as outlined below. It was noted that one resolution comes from this region, from the Philippines.

A. Draft Resolution on Marine Litter and Microplastics (proposed by Norway)

23. Need to address marine litter/(micro)plastics as a high priority was noted due to the impact on livelihoods related to tourism, fishing and because of toxic material from plastics entering the food chain through fish. Need to address scientific data and information gaps was emphasized including on micro plastics monitoring. The role of the private sector in changing the way it produces plastics as a means to reduce toxicity was noted.

B. Draft Resolution on Eliminating Exposure to Lead Paints (proposed by the United States of America)

24. Welcomed and noted that cross ministerial cooperation was needed to address this issue as well as engagement with private sector.

C. Concept note on a Resolution on the Environment and Health Nexus (proposed by the EU)

25. Unsafe drinking water, poor sanitation and lack of solid and electronic waste management have negative health but also economic and social and environmental impacts. Action to address environmental challenges therefore have important co-benefits. Need to develop and strengthen environmental health strategies, policies and action plans at national and regional levels. The importance of cooperation across ministries was emphasized with a focus on ministries of health and environment. It was noted that the concept of “One health” approaches need to be examined from the environmental perspective since normally this concept was used by health not environmental authorities. Need to address knowledge gap on soil pollution and related environment, health, social and economic impact of contaminated soils including from pesticides and fertilizers. It was noted there may be value in an additional resolution on waste management. Need to address the issue of air pollution in the form of particulate matters, such as PM10 and PM2.5, as they have significant impact on human health that results in respiratory conditions. Further integrated approaches are needed to address the nexus between environment and health, in particular to prioritise and address issues such as air quality. Need to strengthen intergovernmental cooperation at all levels to address transboundary pollution given that environmental health risks are also associated with transboundary pollution. Promoting sustainable production and consumption strategies, plans and action can be key to reducing pollution at sources.

D. Draft Resolution calling for the Synchronization of objectives and activities, especially the conduct of meetings of the conferences of the parties/ governing bodies of multilateral environmental agreements and protocols for efficient implementation and monitoring of the agenda 2030 and for cost reduction and effective participation of UN member states (proposed by the Philippines)

26. Measures to reduce costs and strengthen participation of member states in meetings of conferences of the parties/ governing bodies of multilateral environmental agreements were welcomed. It was noted that this resolution could reduce duplication of programmes under the conventions and reduce travel demands on ministers and senior officials. Concern was expressed that the resolution may be difficult to operationalize because different Ministries in countries have responsibility for different conventions and not all Ministries are engaged with the UN environment Assembly and its processes. Member states were encouraged to provide feedback to the Philippines or through UN environment.

E. Draft Resolution To Improve Air Quality in Cities (proposed by Sudan)

27. Rapid urbanization and resulting increased emissions were recognized as a key factor in the region. Need for increased national capacity to improve air quality monitoring and assessment and

to develop air quality policies and strategies (at the sub-national, national, or regional level). It was noted that template plans could be developed and adapted for use in developing national and regional plans to combat air pollution.

Draft declaration of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its third session.

28. Under agenda item 8 (c) on the 'Draft declaration of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its third session'. H.E. Mr. Raza Bashir Tarar, Vice Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Pakistan presented the Draft declaration of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its third session'. Moving forward, member states were encouraged to provide written inputs on the Declaration to UN Environment Programme. A number of issues and priorities were identified for consideration at United Nations Environment Assembly (2017) under this Declaration. They include the following:

- Some common environment and development principles should be included such as those related to common but differentiated responsibilities, technology transfers, and financial assistance.
- Some noted a Declaration, rather than a Chairs summary, was intensive to agree on and was not legally binding on the other hand it was also noted that a Declaration does demonstrate collective commitment by member states.
- Strengthen intergovernmental cooperation at all levels to address and reduce the negative impacts of transboundary forms of pollution.
- Paragraphs 1,3,5 contain figures with no references.
- It was noted that the bullet points after paragraph 5 may be made concise and recognize differing country circumstances.
- If necessary, add text 'Noting that' in beginning of paragraph one. It was noted that the first paragraph could focus on progress achieved so far to provide a more positive perspective. Declaration also refers to specific cases and regions which may not be appropriate for a Declaration.
- There is a need to understand the capacity needs across the region to address pollution. UN Environment Programme can play a role in identifying and supporting capacity development priorities.
- Good governance, economic instruments and regional cooperation were identified as key tools and modalities for action on pollution.
- Given the transboundary nature of pollution emphasis could be placed on UN Environment Assembly's role as a platform for harmonizing and coordinating global action on pollution.
- The importance of drawing on traditional knowledge was emphasized.

29. Civil society groups noted the following:

- Call for UN Environment Assembly to provide meaningful participation by CSOs including in official programmes.
- Need to align resolutions to existing 2030 agenda
- Call for studies on new and emerging technologies including to identify potential and consequences of these technologies.
- Policies must consider social, environmental to support sustainable development.
- Need to promote sustainable forestry and agriculture

IV. Discussion regarding institutional arrangements for the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific.

30. Under agenda item 9, the Chair invited comments on a Background Note on Institutional Arrangements for the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific including senior officials. It was noted that this Forum is organized in response to UN Environment Assembly Resolution 2/2 on the Role and Functions of the Regional Forums of Ministers of Environment and Environment Authorities. As proposed in the note, the future meetings of the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities will be invited to adopt UN Environment Assembly rules of procedure to apply mutatis mutandis and as appropriate to its meetings. One country noted the importance of a consensus approach to the running of the Forum.

V. Adoption of the draft outcomes of the second Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific (member States primarily served by the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

31. Under agenda item 10, the Senior Officials endorsed the present report of the second United Nations Environment Programme Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific.