

**Asia – Pacific Civil Society Statement
to the 10th Global Civil Society Forum and the 25th Session of the UNEP Governing
Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF)**

1. Introduction

Members of Asia – Pacific civil society organisations met at the International Environmental Governance (IEG) Forum and the Regional Consultation Meeting for Asia and the Pacific (RCM-AP) from 27 – 30 November 2008 in Sydney, Australia. This text of the Asia – Pacific Civil Society Statement highlights key elements upon which the participants reached a broad agreement as a priority for promoting environmental management, addressing climate change problems, pursuing sustainable development, improving governance and enhancing the involvement of civil society in pursuing such policy goals recognizing that environment management and justice have not been accorded due priority within governments. Poverty remains pervasive across the region and the forum urges governments to continue to work towards appropriate remedies.

As the world seeks to solve the worsening financial, food and energy crisis, the environment more than ever plays a key role in achieving sustainable development and eliminating poverty without losing sight of achieving overall equity, equality, social justice, well-being and human rights that need be underpinned and integrated in environmental governance and sufficiency based model.

A key strategy is that UNEP, governments and civil society come together in genuine partnership to address these challenges.

2. International Environmental Governance (IEG)

In order to build genuine partnership, international environmental governance needs to be transformed into effective and efficient institutional frameworks through participation of CSOs and grass-root organisations in decision-making processes. The following are particularly vital for Asia and the Pacific:

- (i) Equitable representation of civil society organisations (CSOs) from Asia and the Pacific in IEG processes as a prerequisite in consultative and decision making processes at local, national, sub-regional, regional and international levels,
- (ii) Increased, substantial and stable resource distribution to assist governments and CSOs of the region in tackling environmental and sustainability challenges in a growing magnitude,
- (iii) Reinforcing a human right based approach in IEG framework.

3. Programme of Work

The UNEP Programme of Work for 2010 – 2011 provides an important policy and programme framework for assisting countries and CSO in tackling environmental and sustainability challenges. Concerning the six thematic priority areas, in addition to what is stated above on IEG, the following are of vital importance to the region:

Climate change

- (i) Devising and supporting the effective implementation of green house gases (GHGs) emission mitigation strategies remains to be of utmost importance,
- (ii) Supporting CSOs in assisting governments to make a renewed set of commitments effective in reducing global GHG emissions in the post-2012 period, Paying consideration to climate justice in a sense that GHG emitting countries bear primary responsibility in reducing GHG emissions,
- (iii) Developing market based mechanisms that are grounded on climate justice,
- (iv) Facilitating CSOs' access to information and involvement in decision-making on reduced emissions

- from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD).
- (v) Making available adequate funds and appropriate technology for mitigation and adaptation,
- (vi) Reinforcing co-benefits of poverty elimination and community empowerment, and giving special attention to the poor, marginalized communities and small islands countries most vulnerable to climate change impacts,
- (vii) Promoting disclosure and access to information in order for CSOs to play a more proactive role in tackling climate change, and supporting initiatives to develop and expand information networks and demonstration of good practice.

Resource efficiency and sustainable consumption and production

SCP framework of programme should:

- (i) Assure well-being of all,
- (ii) Ensure equitable consumption opportunities for all,
- (iii) Be adopted based on sufficiency development model,
- (iv) Support policies, measures and activities aimed at the 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle), sustainable consumption and production, and resource efficiency,
- (v) Support the participation of CSOs from the region in the UNEP Resource Panel and its related work, and disseminating information on their work to stakeholders in Asia and the Pacific, and
- (vi) Recognize and support innovative projects and activities that demonstrate modes for community actions and business model to promote resource efficiency.

Ecosystem services and disasters/conflicts

- (i) Giving balanced consideration to the region's diverse ecosystems and building upon the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment,
- (ii) Supporting the development and application of ecosystem service payment schemes and mechanisms that take into account particular local conditions and full and effective participation of community stakeholder and recognition of free and prior informed consent,
- (iii) Supporting case studies and information sharing on good practice on such ecosystem service payment schemes and mechanisms within the region and with other regions,
- (iv) Supporting capacity building to benefit sharing of ecosystem services and biodiversity at the local level,
- (v) Supporting mechanisms and building partnership for trans-boundary ecosystem management in the region building upon the successful experiences, and
- (vi) Promoting ecosystem management in tandem with climate change mitigation/adaptation, disaster preparedness, mitigation and rehabilitation.

Chemical and harmful substances & hazardous wastes

- (i) Assisting CSOs to participate in and support SAICM process and urging governments to adopt and implement the SAICM, and supporting SAICM financial mechanism that provides substantial new and additional funds to developing countries and countries with economies in transition,
- (ii) Promoting the application of precautionary principle, liability and compensation, public participation, right-to-know laws, polluters-pays –principle, no data-no market for sound chemical management,
- (iii) Supporting sustaining, independent, transparent, and participating forums like IFCS,
- (iv) Supporting the ratification and consolidated implementation of all chemicals and waste agreements,
- (v) Promoting the provision of technical and financial support for National Implementation Plans (NIPs) for phasing out POPs including facilitating the prohibition of production and export of chemicals and technologies, when the same are banned within the borders of the exporting countries,
- (vi) Developing a free-standing legal, binding instruments (including a financial mechanism) to address the global mercury challenges,
- (vii) Facilitating effective remediation for chemically contaminated sites (e.g., POPs. Hg, Pb, Cd & other

- metals) ,
- (viii) Developing and promoting the application of labelling and tracking systems of toxic and hazardous chemicals, and
 - (ix) Providing CSOs with a platform to raise awareness and mobilize support concerning environmentally sound management of chemicals including the promotion of green chemicals and organic substitutes.

4. Partnership building and resource mobilization

To more effectively address and undertake activities on the above-mentioned six thematic areas, the following cross-cutting issues of partnership building and resource mobilisation are vital for CSOs in Asia and the Pacific:

- (i) Supporting training, capacity building and sub-regional/regional network activities to enable CSOs and social entrepreneurs in the region to better achieve effective partnership building for environmental management and sustainable development,
- (ii) Ensuring that emerging Green Deal and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) opportunities promote social equity, well-being and justice,
- (iii) Strengthening and/or newly establishing institutional set-ups within each sub-regions of Asia and the Pacific to promote coordination and cooperation among governments and CSOs at the sub-regional level, and
- (iv) Linking sub-regional and regional CSO consultative processes more substantively with the relevant sub-regional and regional environmental ministers' conferences and decision making processes.
- (v) Joint consultation and reporting mechanisms between governments and CSOs, and
- (vi) Institutionalizing regional networks and developing a regional directory of CSOs.