

**UNITED NATIONS**

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

In cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment, Government of Japan

Institute for Global Environmental Strategies

Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment - International Workshop

on Local Initiatives Addressing Transformation of Lifestyles

toward Achieving Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific

23 June 2006, Tokyo, Japan

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The “Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment: International Workshop on Local Initiatives Addressing Transformation of Lifestyles Towards Achieving Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific” was held in Tokyo, Japan on 23 June 2006. The Workshop formulated the following Conclusions and Recommendations, which is, amongst others, to be presented for discussion by the Ministers at Eco Asia 2006.

#### **General Situation**

1. Throughout the Asia-Pacific region, local initiatives are well developed as effective instruments to address different aspects of transformation of lifestyles towards sustainable development. Such aspects includes provoking a shift in the urban development paradigm, developing an institutional and infrastructure base to support lifestyle changes, engaging a broader range of stakeholders in concrete actions at the grassroots level, and educating the young who will inherit over generations. Generally speaking, concrete actions of lifestyle change encompass energy-related, transport-related and waste-related actions.
2. It was recognized that local initiatives are progressively targeting multiple benefits, addressing in particular poverty alleviation (MDG1) and environmental sustainability (MDG7). Environmental benefits demonstrated include waste reduction and pollution abatement in cities; energy saving and GHG emission reduction; and water saving and water pollution control. This is coupled with economic benefits, including cost saving, income generation, creation of new employment, and promotion of new business opportunities. These are not only clearly demonstrated, but also measured quantitatively, in particular, in terms of benefits. Benchmarking of benefits is often critical in enhancing visibility of the achievements of local initiatives, convincing stakeholders of their effectiveness, and obtaining the involvement of those stakeholders. Tools are increasingly available for concretely demonstrating and measuring both environmental and economic benefits.

#### **Gaps and Constraints**

3. A lack of awareness and public apathy towards the environment, lack of capacity and skills, and economic and social issues stemming from environmental problems were identified as key gaps for local governments and NGOs in the implementation of activities. It was noted that there are difficulties in convincing households/residents that changes in consumption behaviour will result in long-term benefits. It was also noted that awareness and information campaigns help change attitudes towards the environment, and result in environmental, economic and

social benefits, which ultimately bring about a transformation of lifestyles.

4. Leadership on the part of core implementing bodies is an important factor in the conduct of successful activities, and local government staff often plays this critical role, in particular, with strong support/leadership by city managers. It was pointed out that capacity building of local government staff was a key issue, particularly in developing countries, to ensure that activities are sustainable even with the withdrawal of external support.

#### **Need for National Support**

5. Local initiatives addressing transformation of lifestyles may be most effective when it is combined or linked with other types of intervention. At the national level, this would include technology- or infrastructure-oriented interventions targeting environmental and economic benefits.
6. It was emphasized that comprehensive national policies and legislation which target the entire material lifecycle, production patterns and/or national development strategies are critical to support local initiatives which often have a limited and sectoral scope, as the environmental issues are sometimes too large to be addressed at the local level only.
7. Activities addressing lifestyle changes targeting environmental and economic benefits have significantly low financial requirements. Nevertheless, financial support is still important for a number of lifestyle-oriented activities, in particular, at the initial investment phase. Current financial support schemes at the national level mostly target technology- or investment- oriented initiatives, and often do not match the requirements of lifestyle-oriented initiatives. Incentive mechanisms to encourage local initiatives also need to be developed at the national level.
8. Knowledge management is an important component to carry out successful activities. Information dissemination through such mediums as databases on local initiatives, and their components or methodologies, would be of benefit to implementing bodies. The development of national information systems in local languages was also encouraged.

#### **Further Networking and International Support**

9. It was noted that domestic and international partnerships among cities and NGOs, as well as participation in the schemes of international agencies and organizations, were a key point to facilitate the sharing of know-how on successful activities; foster collaboration to provide a common platform to share ideas, experiences, and knowledge; facilitate input from other countries on similar problems; and coordinate financial, knowledge, and technical support.
10. It was recognized that a number of international organizations/ programmes provide support to further promote local initiatives. To ensure further effective support, synergy among such programmes was called for to achieve sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific. The Kitakyushu Initiative, in partnership with other international programmes, may play an incubating role to facilitate local initiatives to gain substantive support from donors and financial institutions, such as the Asian Development Bank.