

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

KITAKYUSHU INITIATIVE FOR A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT

INTRODUCTION

1. With rising populations, the process of economic growth, over-exploitation of natural resources for subsistence, increased national earnings and persistent pressure on meeting short-term objectives, many countries in the region are experiencing extreme environmental stress in a number of areas such as the deteriorating quality of urban air, declining water resources in terms of quality and quantity, overloading of wastes due to unsustainable lifestyles and consumption, loss of biodiversity, diminishing coastal resources, and exposure to hazardous chemicals and wastes. There is an urgent need for some of these environmental problems to be tackled in the short term as the situation has already reached a critical dimension affecting human health, the national economy and the natural ecosystem.

2. An overall assessment of the critical environment and sustainable development issues has been provided, with a clear focus on the intensity of the problem, quantification of the trends, projections to be based on probable environmental and development scenarios, and an assessment of the impact on a regional and subregional basis, and possible options, on the basis of the 1985, 1990, 1995 and draft 2000 reports of the state of the environment in Asia and the Pacific. The programme areas of the proposed regional action programme for environmentally sound and sustainable development, 2001-2005 have also been identified on the basis of this assessment, as well as the recommendations of the experts made at the Brainstorming Workshop held in August 1999 and the subsequent subregional consultation meetings.

3. In order to facilitate efficient and effective implementation of the regional action programme, it was considered appropriate that the selected programme areas of the programme should be highlighted and provided with a priority mechanism for implementation. Such priority areas should most reasonably be selected among the key sectors identified in the assessment of the critical environment and sustainable development issues in the region.

4. The city of Kitakyushu, where the fourth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2000 is taking place, is renowned for having successfully overcome the environmental pollution that was once very severe in its urban area. It also has a cooperative arrangement to assist a number of local authorities in the Asian and Pacific region. The successful experience in improving the environment could be shared and even replicated by ESCAP members and associate members. The "Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment" has been developed to commemorate the organization of the Ministerial Conference in the city of Kitakyushu, in close cooperation with the city authorities and taking maximum advantage of their determination to contribute, through their experience, to making tangible progress in the environment and development in Asia and the Pacific following the Ministerial Conference.

5. The Kitakyushu Initiative attempts to draw lessons from the city's practices and experiences and put them together as a menu of effective action that could be useful in other cities in the region. In

order to explore the applicability of the experience of Kitakyushu to other cities of the region, it is essential to consider the socio-economic and technological conditions that ensured the success of the clean-up effort of Kitakyushu. It is also understood that, in the application of this initiative, good practices and successful programmes from elsewhere should be fully taken into consideration.

6. The transformation of Kitakyushu from a grey industrial city to a green city was achieved in four stages: (a) problem discovery and recognition between 1950 and 1967; (b) the systematic implementation of environmental measures and the establishment of an environmental management system from 1967 to 1980; (c) the implementation of a sophisticated environmental management system from 1980 to 1990; and (d) the start of new challenges from 1990 onwards. A similar pursuit in the twenty-first century would have the advantage of existing superior knowledge and technology, successful experience and the revolution in information technology, all of which would make possible an achievement similar to Kitakyushu in a relatively short period.

7. In view of the large number of initiatives taken before and after the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 that included the regional ministerial conferences on environment and development held in 1985, 1990 and 1995, there is heightened public awareness of and a positive attitude towards achieving a cleaner environment and turning the current trend of development into a sustainable path. This would mean that the ambient air and water quality of urban areas should be within permissible limits for human health, and the ever-increasing menace of urban wastes should be brought within the management capacity of local government and communities. The shrinking green areas and polluted water bodies in urban and peri-urban areas require urgent remedial measures. Agreement is needed on a minimum target within a given time frame that can be achieved through this initiative with the support of national, regional and subregional action agreed upon in the regional action programme.

8. The Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment is intended to assist in the priority implementation of the programme area of the regional action programme relating to environmental quality and human health. Its mission is to achieve measurable progress in a given time frame, in improving the environment in the urban areas in Asia and the Pacific, principally through local initiatives aimed at control of air and water pollution, minimization of all kinds of wastes and alleviating other urban environmental problems. The participation in this initiative will be limited to local government and other organizations of members and associate members of ESCAP.

I. POLICIES AND ACTIONS

A. Policy guidance benefiting from the experience of Kitakyushu

9. The developing countries of Asia and the Pacific are confronted with multiple tasks for economic development and environmental protection. They also face new industrial challenges. They must achieve clean industrial development, controlling air and water pollution which are already serious in many urban centres, mitigating environmental damage, and improving eco-efficiency by developing and adopting new eco-technologies. Local governments, including those in cities, can play a vital role in mitigating pollution and taking remedial measures for environmental improvement because, in most cases, they have authority over land use, transportation, building construction, waste management, and often over energy supply and management. Cities can encourage voluntary action by citizens and businesses through day-to-day communications, campaigns and information dissemination in combination with various policy tools. To this end, the following measures may be effective:

(a) *To strengthen local initiatives*

- (i) Strengthen the initiatives of local authorities to solve the environmental problems which have their roots in local activities;
- (ii) Ensure that initiatives of local authorities are not confined solely to purely local problems; local initiatives are also a key for the solution of global environmental problems;
- (iii) Improve the environmental management capabilities of local authorities in terms of legislative power, human resources, financial and technical capability, etc.;
- (iv) Encourage national governments to set up proper institutional frameworks to support local initiatives, enhance the problem-solving capacities of local authorities, provide information, etc.;

(b) *To enhance partnerships*

- (i) Promote dialogue, consultation and consensus-building between local authorities, citizens, local organizations and private enterprise;
- (ii) Enhance cooperation between national and local governments;
- (iii) Increase awareness of businesses and households;
- (iv) Encourage local governments to play the role of mediator in the dialogue between businesses and citizens, which is frequently seen as a dialogue between polluters and victims;
- (v) Improve communication with households and businesses;
- (vi) Promote information exchange among all stakeholders;

(c) ***To strengthen environmental management capability at the local level***

- (i) Define clear targets to be achieved, present a list of possible measures and designate priorities among the measures; a regional environmental management programme can be made to depict the holistic picture of environmental management measures;
- (ii) Ensure that local environmental authorities have sufficient flexibility to establish their own standards and targets, based upon local conditions and realities, as appropriate, thereby facilitating enhanced regulation and enforcement of readily assessable targets;
- (iii) Enhance the scientific ground of local environmental policy, and promote environmental management supported by best scientific data and technology;
- (iv) Enhance the role of local scientific research institutes and universities;
- (v) Strengthen environmental monitoring capabilities of local authorities;
- (vi) Strengthen the implementation of standards which are based on national and local laws;
- (vii) Improve databases, and encourage periodic reporting and the publication of statistics;

(d) ***To improve the environmental technology base***

- (i) Conduct assessment of technologies which are appropriate for solving problems;
- (ii) Nurture the local capability of technology development, especially for the development of local technologies best suited to local conditions;
- (iii) Ensure proper combination of end-of-pipe and cleaner production technologies, which could be more efficient for achieving sustainable development goals, and encourage their transfer;
- (iv) Promote the development of eco-technology and environmental industry;
- (v) Create a new development model based on the development of environmental industry;
- (vi) Create a “resource recycling society”, in which resources are more efficiently utilized through reuse and recycling;

(e) ***To promote public and private sector investment in the environment***

- (i) Promote public investment to improve the environment (for example, the sewerage system, solid waste treatment and disposal);
- (ii) Encourage private sector investment for pollution control and environmental improvement in conformity with the “polluter pays principle”;

- (iii) Address the needs and financial constraints of small and medium-sized enterprises in complying with environmental management and pollution standards;
- (f) ***To promote environmental information and education***
- (i) Enhance the role of local organizations for environmental education and campaigns;
 - (ii) Ensure the transparency of administration by information disclosure;
 - (iii) Better utilize advanced information and communication technology;
- (g) ***To strengthen international environmental cooperation based on local initiatives***
- (i) Strengthen intercity cooperation;
 - (ii) Encourage the transfer to cities in other countries of technology and know-how packages, good practices and the successful municipal/regional development model of a city;
 - (iii) Ensure financial support for international cooperation initiatives of local authorities;
 - (iv) Link local initiatives with international cooperation schemes of nations (for example, official development assistance);
 - (v) Encourage participation of private enterprises;
 - (vi) Strengthen linkages between intercity networks and cooperation channels.

B. Proposed measures

10. In order to encourage local governments in the region to take measures to promote the above actions, the following support measures may be proposed:

(a) The establishment of the “Kitakyushu Initiative Network for a Clean Environment” with the participation of local governments of ESCAP members and associate members. The Network should have the primary function of being a permanent forum to strengthen intercity cooperation in implementing the Kitakyushu Initiative in Asia and the Pacific, through the following means:

- (i) Assistance in preparing and implementing integrated and sustainable urban development plans and strategies with quantitative indicators;
- (ii) Periodical monitoring of the implementation status (in terms of quantitative indicators);
- (iii) Promotion of information exchange and sharing of experience among participating local governments;

- (iv) Provision of a platform for the transfer of technology and know-how packages, good practices and a successful municipal/regional model for sustainable development;
- (v) Linkages, catalysation and facilitation of internal and external financial support to international cooperation initiatives of local authorities;
- (vi) Facilitation of capacity-building activities for environmental administration staff in participating local governments;
- (vii) Promotion of environmental education programme in intercity cooperation, such as student exchanges;
- (viii) Encouragement of private enterprises to participate in infrastructure development and environmental quality enhancement programmes;

(b) Support from the national government: although the Kitakyushu Initiative will be primarily implemented at the local level, involving local government, NGOs, the private sector and the general public, the involvement of the national government will be essential. The support of national governments for, with appropriate acknowledgement of, the Kitakyushu Initiative, is particularly important in setting socio-economic and technological conditions to achieve countrywide sustainable development, providing legislative infrastructure and, in particular, mobilizing bilateral donor assistance;

(c) Strengthened linkages with the academic community: considering the vital role currently performed by the scientific community in assisting the formulation of local policies on sustainable development, as well as in proliferating human resources with enhanced scientific background for local environmental administration, such linkages should be further strengthened. Case studies, to be conducted jointly with the Kitakyushu Initiative Network, on the city-specific approaches to the implementation of the Kitakyushu Initiative in different cities would add value to the information exchange activities of the Network;

(d) Collaboration with existing international initiatives: in view of synergy and forging a mutually beneficial partnership, linkages should be strengthened with ongoing international initiatives in the relevant field and with the Regional Network of Local Authorities for the Management of Human Settlements (CITYNET) and the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) in particular. In addition, implementation of the Kitakyushu Initiative should be appropriately highlighted in the agenda of subregional environmental cooperation programmes, such as the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Senior Officials on the Environment, the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme, the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the North-East Asian Subregional Programme of Environmental Cooperation.

11. As technology transfer is one of the critical factors in replicating experience from one country to another, the Kitakyushu Initiative Network should be capable of performing a clearinghouse

function to provide information on environmentally sound technologies. The Network should be fully coordinated with existing international initiatives, such as the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology, the International Environmental Technology Centre of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the urban environmental technology initiatives of the United Nations Development Programme, and national cleaner production centres and environmental technology assessment of UNEP and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization. Cooperation with the scientific community would also enhance the capacity of the local government to deal with technical information.

12. In implementing the Kitakyushu Initiative, financial resources should be primarily mobilized from domestic sources of all possible kinds. However, it is expected that additional resources could be facilitated through the supportive measures listed in paragraph 10 (a)-(d) above. The determination of ESCAP members and associate members in concentrating their efforts on the most critical priority areas of environmental quality and human health in the regional action programme would certainly draw the attention of external donors to the implementation of the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment.

C. Action areas, targets and indicators

13. A number of policy and action targets are already proposed in the regional action programme in the area of environmental quality and human health. The Kitakyushu Initiative calls for effective implementation of the regional action programme at local levels, with close cooperation and collaboration among local governments, the private sector, NGOs and other civil society groups and individual citizens.

14. Quantitative targets may be set for a few action areas for a certain number of measurable indicators to monitor achievements in implementing the Kitakyushu Initiative. In order to achieve those quantitative targets, policy and action targets need to be set, which should be the main focus of this initiative. The indicators are intended to measure the effectiveness or success of the policies to enable periodic review and adjustment. The indicators would first be measured at the local level and then aggregated for the national and regional level, and the detailed measurement and aggregation procedures will be further defined through continuous consultation. Some examples of the action areas and the indicators are given below. These may be further refined in the subsequent discussion process of the local authorities.

- **Action area: enhanced integrated urban planning strategies**

Indicators:

- (i) Adoption of enhanced integrated urban policies, planning and strategies;
- (ii) Coverage of comprehensive land-use planning;
- (iii) Coverage of green belt and green areas;

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- (iv) Coverage of water supply and sanitation services;
- (v) Extent of private sector participation in infrastructure development.

- **Action area: improvement in air quality to meet WHO standards or local standards where they exist**

Indicators :

- (i) Consumption of different types of fuels (leaded/high-sulphur-content gasoline versus compressed natural gas, liquefied petroleum gas, etc.);
- (ii) Air pollution loads by source and their abatement;
- (iii) Rate for users of public transportation/private vehicles;
- (iv) Number of cities which have introduced new traffic control systems to reduce air pollution.

- **Action area: improvement in water quality to meet WHO standards or local standards where they exist**

Indicators :

- (i) Percentage of biochemical oxygen demand removed by domestic wastewater treatment systems;
- (ii) Extent of compliance.

- **Action area: management of wastes to meet minimum hygienic standards and reduction of per capita waste generation**

Indicators :

- (i) Percentage of solid and biomedical wastes safely collected, treated, disposed of and recycled;
- (ii) Rate of waste reduction by adopting waste minimization techniques;
- (iii) Number of voluntary pollution reduction initiatives communicated by local industries;
- (iv) Number of local industries which have adopted cleaner production approaches and actions.

- **Action area: capacity-building, awareness-raising and stakeholder participation**

Indicators :

- (i) Number of adequately trained staff in the local environmental administration;
- (ii) Number of campaigns and rate of citizen participation in environmental education/awareness-raising programmes;
- (iii) Number of projects implemented with stakeholder participation.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

15. Based on the above review of the necessary policy and action for improving urban environmental quality, the Ministers:

(a) Encourage local governments of ESCAP members and associate members to implement the actions and measures proposed in this document as the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment;

(b) Endorse the establishment of the Kitakyushu Initiative Network for a Clean Environment, and invite local governments and other relevant organizations of ESCAP members and associate members to participate in the Network;

(c) Agree that the primary function of the Network is to provide a forum to strengthen cooperation among local governments of ESCAP members and associate members in implementing the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment in the Asian and Pacific region;

(d) Agree that the first meeting of the Kitakyushu Initiative Network will be organized by ESCAP in cooperation with the city of Kitakyushu and relevant organizations. The meeting will decide on the modalities of operation of the Network, and develop a project for pursuing the outcome of the Ministerial Conference with regard to the Kitakyushu Initiative to address the identified goals and targets and periodic review and assessment of achievements;

(e) Encourage ESCAP members and associate members to make a determined and concentrated effort to assist local governments in implementing the Kitakyushu Initiative, by inter alia dealing with one of the most critical priority areas of improving urban environmental quality among the whole spectrum of issues included in the Regional Action Programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development, 2001-2005;

(f) Request the donor community to provide adequate financial support to implement the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment;

(g) Express deep appreciation to the authorities of the city of Kitakyushu for continued interest in sharing their experience with other interested local government authorities, and in particular for their readiness to participate in this initiative for urban environmental quality improvement in Asia and the Pacific.