

Foreward

In order to respond to the manifold environmental issues in the Asia-Pacific Region, environmental Ministers adopted the “Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment” at the 4th Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN/ESCAP), in September 2000. The Kitakyushu Initiative is a mechanism for the priority implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific (RAP), 2001-2005, with special focus on environmental quality and human health. The Kitakyushu Initiative has since been included as a Type I initiative in the Plan of Implementation at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in September 2002.

As part of activities under the Kitakyushu Initiative, UN/ESCAP, as the main promoter of the Initiative, and the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), as the secretariat responsible for implementation of the Initiative, have undertaken the organization of thematic seminars to build the capacity of local governments in the area of urban environmental management.

The first thematic seminar, the **Kitakyushu Initiative Seminar on Solid Waste Management**, organised by UN/ESCAP and IGES, was held on 19-20 September in Kitakyushu, Japan. The Seminar provided a forum for open discussions on concrete measures to overcome solid waste issues, a critical issue for cities in Asia and the Pacific, with specific focus on management of household waste. With changes in lifestyles, the problems faced by cities have compounded, witnessed in the increase in both solid and hazardous waste, rising issues pertaining to landfill management, and increased interest in recycling. There are often contrasts between cities with different economic levels and cultures with regard to priority issues, as well as treatment techniques.

The Seminar was conducted over a period of two days, and included a half-day field visit on 19 September on Kitakyushu’s comprehensive solid waste management system, with inspection tours to a can/bottle recycling centre, an incineration plant and final disposal site. Representatives from 12 cities in the Asia-Pacific Region attended the Seminar, as well as representatives of the donor community and outside experts, including the Kitakyushu

International Techno-Cooperative Association (KITA), Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), Prefectural University of Kumamoto (Japan), Nippon Koei Co., Ltd., United Nations Environment Programme/International Environmental Technology Centre (UNEP/IETC), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), and Yamaguchi University (Japan).

The presentations provided a clear picture of the various challenges and strategies of municipal governments in recycling, collection and landfill, and overall management.

Experts facilitated discussions on numerous topics, including methods to reconcile the issue of increases of waste and reduction at source. The sustainability and feasibility of eco-town projects in other countries, such as Bangladesh and India was also addressed. The practical application of experiences in Japan, such as the production of eco-cement, was a widely debated point; the transfer of experiences from city to city, as well as an appropriate balance of different purification technologies in order to design and operate final disposal sites was also examined.

Other discussions highlighted the problems facing municipalities with regard to changing the attitudes of communities that feel that solid waste services are the responsibility of the local government. Issues of user fees, outsourcing and concessions to the private sector in collection and final disposal, and the role of local governments were also addressed. Participants held the common idea that community participation is an important aspect in the improvement of collection efficiency.

Other issues included financial shortages facing municipalities in the creation of waste disposal facilities and the importance of private sector participation in this area (BOT approach), as well as the significance of fines, collection fees, and regulations. The disparity in budget allocations for solid waste management in different municipalities, as well as jurisdiction, enforcement, and technology was also reviewed. Participants discoursed on the necessity of motivating and welcoming residents, including scavengers, into the overall waste management system. Participants concluded that the introduction of private sector participation is important to increase the efficiency of overall solid waste management. The importance of education through campaigns and the media was also debated

to change the behaviour of people and raise awareness through the exchange of information and experiences.

The two-day Seminar concluded with open discussions among the local governments, international agencies, consulting firms, and academia. Participants reasoned that the replication of successful practices and implementation of pilot activities is advantageous in providing necessary information to local governments for effective solid waste management. Discussants also determined that the transfer and application of locally appropriate technologies and enforcement mechanisms should be considered to address diverse situations and issues, and stressed the importance of the roles of the public and private sector, as well as capacity building of local governments.

Recommendations were formulated for the implementation of the Kitakyushu Initiative with respect to the issue of solid waste management in Asia and the Pacific, as follows:

- (1) The Kitakyushu Initiative should assist in the dissemination of environmentally friendly methods and technologies for the transfer of experiences such as the Fukuoka Method;
- (2) The Kitakyushu Initiative should assist in the use of information technologies for better management by cities including solid waste management;
- (3) The Kitakyushu Initiative should promote commitment of mayors, as well as community-based approaches in solid waste management;
- (4) Institutional capacity building should be promoted under the Kitakyushu Initiative through the organization of sectoral seminars and training;
- (5) The exchange of experiences and successful practices should be strengthened and continued to learn from specialized experiences of various cities through cooperation with the media and Internet-based tools.
- (6) The Kitakyushu Initiative should promote the conduct of pilot activities to attract attention from the donor community.

This report contains an overview of the current state of solid waste management of the local governments that participated in the 1st thematic seminar.