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Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific

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Ministerial declaration on environment and development in Asia and the Pacific, 2010

As adopted by the sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific on 2 October 2010

We, the ministers for environment and development and heads of delegations of the members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP),

Having met in Astana on 1 and 2 October 2010 at the sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2010,

Reaffirming our commitment to the implementation of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development¹ and the provisions of Agenda 21,² the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development,³ in particular the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation,⁴ which incorporates the priority initiatives of the Phnom Penh Regional Platform on Sustainable Development for Asia and the Pacific,⁵ the 2005 World Summit, where the Millennium Development Goals were agreed upon, the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,⁶ the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable

¹ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex I.

² *Ibid.*, annex II.

³ See *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I.

⁴ *Ibid.*, resolution 2, annex.

⁵ E/CN.17/2002/PC.2/8.

⁶ *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, 25 April-6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

Development of Small Island Developing States⁷ and the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building,⁸

1. *Recognize that:*

(a) For many developing countries, poverty eradication, achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development are paramount goals;

(b) Green growth, as appropriately adapted to country-specific circumstances and as understood in the context of sustainable development, is one of the approaches for supporting rapid economic growth, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and environmental sustainability;

(c) Several major crises have hit the Asian and Pacific region: the economic crisis triggered by the financial meltdown, the price volatility of key resources, the ecological problems generated by dwindling natural capital, including water and food resources, and climate change induced natural disasters that have created additional burdens for the countries of Asia and the Pacific, especially the most vulnerable ones and the least developed countries, to attain their overall socio-economic development. These crises call for a shift in the development paradigm towards “inclusive and sustainable growth” patterns;

(d) Asia and the Pacific, the fastest-growing region in the world, with the largest number of people (950 million) living in poverty, whose demand for food, energy, water and natural resources is continuing to grow rapidly and, yet, the basic needs of millions of people remain unmet;

(e) The sectoral growth in transport, waste and chemical use is increasing the ecological footprint of the region;

(f) The risk from climate change has increased due to higher temperatures and the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events;

(g) Air, water, land and biodiversity in ecosystems are essential for supporting economies and societies alike in the Asian and Pacific region;

(h) Unsustainable consumption and production patterns could put increasing pressure on the carrying capacity and result in declining quality of life;

(i) The region needs to continue rapid economic growth in order to lift millions of people out of poverty and achieve Millennium Development Goal 1. At the same time, it is vital to keep environmental sustainability high on the agenda, as proposed in Millennium Development

⁷ *Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10-14 January 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

⁸ Adopted at the High-level Open-ended Intergovernmental Working Group on an Intergovernmental Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building at its third session, held in Bali, Indonesia, on 4 December 2004.

Goal 7. The pace of growth and environmental vigilance must be maintained and one must not be sacrificed for the other;

(j) The paradigm of sustainable development needs to be promoted through, among others, the green growth approach, with due regard for equity and country-specific circumstances, harmonizing rapid economic growth and environmental sustainability;

(k) Education for sustainable development is an important instrument that can assist ESCAP member States in addressing the several major crises that have hit the region and in support of a smooth transition towards green growth;

(l) Regional initiatives, such as the Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment⁹ and the Seoul Initiative on Environmentally Sustainable Economic Growth (Green Growth),¹⁰ as well as initiatives undertaken by the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation¹¹ and other regional and national initiatives of ESCAP member States provide excellent examples of experiences in promoting new approaches to economic growth and have created the necessary impetus to strengthen region-wide cooperative action.

2. *Intend to:*

(a) Consider creating an enabling socio-economic environment to drive the changes needed to foster and promote a sustainable development path;

(b) Engage all stakeholders to support and speed up the required changes through appropriate measures for:

- (i) Improving consumer awareness and creating new consumer consciousness about making informed choices for environmentally sustainable products, services and lifestyles;
- (ii) Supporting and encouraging new consumer behaviour by using tools, such as, among others, demand-side management measures, as appropriate, to country-specific circumstances to enhance sustainable consumption and lifestyles;
- (iii) Developing national policies, strategies, action plans and relevant activities as appropriate in formal and informal environmental educational settings for

⁹ Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, *Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific 2000, Kitakyushu, Japan, 31 August-5 September 2000: Ministerial Declaration, Regional Action Programme (2001-2005) and Kitakyushu Initiative for a Clean Environment (ST/ESCAP/2096)* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.01.II.F.12), Part Three.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, *The Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2005 (ST/ESCAP/2379)* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.F.31), Annex III.

¹¹ See the Thimphu Statement on Climate Change, adopted at the sixteenth summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, held in Thimphu on 28 and 29 April 2010. Available from www.sixteenthsaarcsummit.bt.

children and youth, based on the main principles provided under the education for sustainable development framework;

- (iv) Establishing a network for the implementation of regional and subregional environmental education projects; developing and integrating frameworks for education on sustainable development at the national level to facilitate the implementation of regional and subregional initiatives and action plans for sustainable development;
- (v) Promoting the “harmony with nature” approach while respecting and strengthening the Asian and Pacific traditional lifestyle, cultural and spiritual values;
- (vi) Promoting at the national level, within country-specific circumstance, a mechanism for the “polluter pays” principle, and efficient management of natural resources.

(c) Creating and further replicating successful models for partnership with the private sector in implementing the required fundamental changes, while encouraging:

- (i) Investments to promote efficient use of resources, innovation and environmental infrastructure;
- (ii) Exchange of information on polluter pays principle practices, deployment, application and transfer of technology and know-how in developing national capacities for achieving sustainable consumption and production;
- (iii) Public awareness and investment in related research programmes and assistance to vulnerable populations adversely affected by climate change.

(d) Considering, wherever appropriate and feasible and in accordance with national circumstances, the incorporation of environmental costs into market prices and using, economic and market-based instruments that are supportive of sustainable development.

3. *Decide* to work together, as appropriate, towards:

(a) Strengthening regional and subregional cooperation for the promotion of environmentally sustainable economic growth, or green growth, as one of the prerequisites for attaining the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development;

(b) Encouraging joint research on the development and application of policies and tools, including environmentally sound technologies and taking all practical steps to promote and facilitate, as appropriate, the transfer of or access to environmentally sound technologies;

(c) Promoting knowledge-sharing networks to exchange experiences and analyses, lessons learned from sustainable development pilot projects highlighting pro-poor, pro-environment growth;

(d) Increasing technical assistance and exchanges of information and experience sharing in eco-tourism, waste management and recycling, disaster risk management etc. among the member countries with focus on countries in need;

(e) Promoting capacity-building and technology transfer initiatives, to encourage and facilitate the use of eco-efficient, resource-efficient and green technologies in economies in transition and developing countries, in particular small island developing States, mountain, landlocked developing countries, and least developed countries, particularly those that are the most vulnerable countries in Asia and the Pacific;

(f) Implementing the Regional Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2011-2015,¹² and regional and subregional initiatives, including the Astana “Green Bridge” Initiative¹³ and the establishment of a Europe-Asia-Pacific partnership;

(g) Emphasizing the necessary flow of new technologies and transfer of know-how and technologies for capacity building to developing countries in the Asia and Pacific region;

(h) Investing in the protection of the natural resource base of economic and social significance, which is critical for food security, environment and sustainable development;

(i) Promoting the sustainable development path as an approach to climate change adaptation and mitigation, and enhancing the resilience of society and the economy to natural calamities and unforeseen shocks;

(j) Promoting sustainable urban development and infrastructure;

(k) Adopting a post-2010 biodiversity target at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Nagoya, Japan, in October 2010, and achieving a significant reduction in the current rate of biodiversity loss, remembering that the 2010 biodiversity target has not yet been met;

(l) Combating various environmental threats by strengthening initiatives at the regional, subregional and national levels for monitoring, evaluation, assessment, energy cooperation, pollution control and nature conservation as appropriate;

(m) Promoting and fostering regional cooperation for the sustainable usage of natural resources in the Asia-Pacific region;

(n) Promoting synergies with ESCAP and other development partners and global and regional strategies, to develop green growth strategies to address the particular and unique vulnerabilities of small island developing States and least developed countries;

¹² E/ESCAP/MCED(6)/12.

¹³ E/ESCAP/MCED(6)/13.

(o) Supporting soil resources development to ensure sustainable agriculture and increasing eco-system productivity.

4. *Request* the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to assist member countries in implementing the provisions of the present declaration and to submit a mid-term review and a final review to the seventh Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development, in 2015.

5. *Invite* donor countries, relevant United Nations bodies and agencies and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, in particular, and multilateral financial institutions, other intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society to:

(a) Provide full support, including financial and technical support, for the implementation of the Regional Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2011-2015 as well as other interregional, regional and subregional initiatives, including the Astana “Green Bridge” Initiative;

(b) Assist countries and subregions which are most vulnerable to climate change and under continuous threat of natural disasters in their immediate and long-term adaptation needs.

6. *Agree* to convene the seventh Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific in the year 2015.

7. *Express* our sincere appreciation to the people and the Government of Kazakhstan for the warm hospitality and excellent organization of the Conference.
