



**The 16<sup>th</sup> Environment Congress for Asia and the Pacific  
(ECO Asia 2008)**

**Nagoya, Japan  
September 13, 2008**

**Chair's Summary**

1. The Sixteenth Environment Congress for Asia and the Pacific, ECO Asia 2008, was convened in the city of Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan, on September 13, 2008. The Congress was organized by the Ministry of the Environment of Japan and hosted by the city of Nagoya. The Congress was attended by national delegates, including Ministers and senior officials from 11 countries, representatives of 16 international organizations, and a wide range of other participants.
2. Reaffirming the importance of regional cooperation in addressing a wide variety of environmental issues in line with tackling sustainable development challenges in the Asia-Pacific region, the annual Congress aims at exchanging information and views on policies and measures at regional, national, and local levels. ECO Asia 2008 focused on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity, considering the increasing importance of this topic, amongst others, in the Asia-Pacific region.
3. In his opening address, H.E. Dr. Tetsuo Saito, Minister of the Environment of Japan thanked the distinguished participants for attending the ECO Asia 2008 meeting and expressed his gratitude to Mr. Matsubara, Mayor of the City of Nagoya, for co-organizing the meeting. Minister Saito pointed out that humankind heavily depends on the roughly estimated 30 million species, which include unidentified ones. At the same time, humans are responsible for increasing the rate of biodiversity loss by 1000 times over the past few hundreds of years. Minister Saito stressed the responsibility of the Asia-Pacific region as the world economy's driving force to seek a sustainable way of development, while reducing the large impact that accelerated development in the region has had on biodiversity.
4. Mr. Takehisa Matsubara, Mayor of the City of Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan, welcomed the distinguished participants on behalf of the citizens of Nagoya. In reference to the Fujimae tidal flat, he emphasized the importance of collaboration with the citizens of Nagoya in achieving waste reduction and international youth exchange.
5. The Congress unanimously elected H.E. Dr. Tetsuo Saito, Minister of the Environment of Japan, as the Chair of the meeting. The Congress also adopted the Agenda and designated Dr. Emil Salim, Special Envoy for the President of the Republic of Indonesia, as facilitator of Session 1, on Biodiversity – Road to 2010 and Beyond. Prof. Dr. Kunio Iwatsuki, Director of the Museum of Nature and Human Activities, served as facilitator for Session 2, on Specific Actions for Biodiversity.

6. Following the opening remarks by Minister Saito, Dr. Emil Salim acted as Session Facilitator and invited Dr. Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary, Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Mr. Daizaburo Kuroda, Director General, Ministry of the Environment, Japan, and Dr. Jeffrey McNeely, Chief Scientist, IUCN to deliver three lead presentations at Session 1, on Biodiversity – Road to 2010 and Beyond.
7. Following the opening remarks made by Minister Saito in Session 2, on Specific Actions for Biodiversity, Prof. Dr. Kunio Iwatsuki, Director of the Museum of Nature and Human Activities acted as Session Facilitator. He invited Prof. A.H. Zakri, Director of the United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies, Mr. Masao Yamada, Deputy Mayor of the city of Nagoya, Mr Takashi Inagaki, Vice Governor, Aichi Prefecture, Mr. Jorgen Thomsen, Senior Vice President, Conservation International and Director of the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), Mr. Davaadorj Delgertsogt, Vice Minister and Ms. Choikhand Janchivlamdan, Director for International Cooperation of the Ministry of Nature and Environment, Mongolia, and Korowa Pokeya, First secretary of Minister of Environment and Conservation, Papua New Guinea to deliver presentations on specific actions for biodiversity.
8. Based on the various introductory presentations made at each session, the representatives and participants at ECO Asia 2008 agreed upon the importance of addressing and promoting implementation of policy measures and actions on the following issues at the various levels in Asia and the Pacific. This Chair's Summary is intended to reflect the thrust of discussions and shared views among the representatives who attended ECO Asia 2008. Further detailed key elements of presentations and discussions are attached in the Annex.
9. The following are the key issues highlighted and shared in the discussions on biodiversity issues in Asia and the Pacific.

#### Status of biodiversity in Asia and the Pacific

- (1) Biodiversity loss has been being accelerated due to increasing demands for food and fuel. Economic loss caused by the extinction of biodiversity is a growing concern around the world. Climate change further exacerbates the loss of biodiversity as changing temperature and precipitation patterns negatively affect ecosystems and biodiversity.

#### 2010 Biodiversity Target

- (2) It is vital to facilitate policy measures and actions for achieving the 2010 Biodiversity Target. Countries need to assess the achievement made in implementing National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans that need to be revised over time in order to accelerate policy measures and activities towards achieving the 2010 Biodiversity Target. Sub-regional and regional strategies must be also developed and their implementation should be facilitated.

#### Kobe Call for Action for Biodiversity

- (3) The Kobe Call for Action for Biodiversity that was adopted at the Group of 8 Environment Ministers' Meeting in Kobe, Japan in May 2008 and endorsed at the Group of 8 Summit in Toyako, Hokkaido in July 2008 was reaffirmed at ECO Asia 2008. Japan reiterated its commitments to implementing the Kobe Call for Action, and this was welcomed by the Congress. Further efforts need to be made towards facilitating the implementation of the Call in the region as well as at the global level.

#### Comprehensive approach

- (4) Biodiversity must be assessed from a comprehensive viewpoint to cover various types of ecosystems such as forests, agricultural land, marine and coastal areas, drylands and wetlands. Interdependence of various ecosystems also needs to be well understood, for instance, linkages among rice fields, rivers, and forests. A draft resolution on rice fields that will be considered at the Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention is expected to reinforce a policy framework for promoting sustainable agriculture, biodiversity conservation, and ecosystem management in an integrated manner.

#### Nexus of policies to address biodiversity, climate change, and poverty

- (5) The inter-linkages of policies and measures must be strengthened to increase their overall effectiveness to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and poverty eradication.

#### Elevating biodiversity conservation to a new paradigm

- (6) It is important to rethink the entire approach to development, changing the paradigm to consider the environment as an essential element. At all levels from household to national, regional, and global, ideas from biological systems need to be used to help ensure that development is sustainable. Biology can guide appropriate new technologies, new ways of thinking, and a more comprehensive approach to development.

#### CDM and REDD

- (7) To further cultivate the nexus of biodiversity conservation and climate change-related actions, biodiversity components need to be integrated into the Clean Development Mechanism under the Kyoto Protocol of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In addition, mechanisms proposed under the so-called "Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation" (REDD) need to be materialized in order for promoting in an integrated manner forest conservation, biodiversity conservation, and climate change-related actions.

#### Multi-stakeholder involvement

- (8) Biodiversity conservation requires multi-stakeholder involvement. The activities on biodiversity undertaken by NGOs and local governments are important and they need to be bolstered. The private sector needs to play a more proactive role in promoting activities for biodiversity conservation and sustainable use as well as for sharing technology and supporting research work.

#### City and Biodiversity

- (9) Biodiversity in cities also deserves due attention and actions. Biodiversity conservation needs to be integrated into city planning as well as natural resource and waste

management. In Japan, exemplary initiatives have been undertaken by local governments, such as those of the governments of the city of Nagoya and Aichi Prefecture, and such experiences and lessons should be shared more widely.

#### Capacity development

- (10) Institutional and social capacity must be strengthened to undertake activities for monitoring, conserving, and utilizing biodiversity in a sustainable manner.

#### Monitoring network development

- (11) To promote effective biodiversity policies and actions based on sound scientific observation and analysis, monitoring networks need to be developed and strengthened at the national, regional, and international levels.

#### Post-2010 Target

- (12) It is vital to set an effective post-2010 biodiversity target based on the achievements and lessons learnt from the implementation of the 2010 Biodiversity Target.

#### Asian models

- (13) To develop effective mechanisms for community-based ecosystem management, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable use in symbiosis with nature, it is imperative to develop models suitable to the diverse and significant ecological endowments and distinctive socio-economic conditions of Asia and the Pacific. Rice fields and their cultivation are, for example, prevalent both as an ecosystem and a cultural factor in Asia.

#### Satoyama Initiative

- (14) The “Satoyama Initiative” promoted by the Government of Japan provides a useful framework to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use in rural areas where sustainable livelihoods are maintained based on traditional and local knowledge regarding, and practices for, living in harmony with nature.

#### Market mechanisms

- (15) Valuation of ecosystems and environmental services must be integrated in national and local development plans. Payment for environmental services, green taxes, and investment and other incentive and disincentive measures need to be incorporated into key policy measures on biodiversity.

#### Political wills and public awareness

- (16) The tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD/COP10) scheduled to take place in the city of Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, Japan in October 2010 is an important landmark conference. High-level policy makers, notably heads of state and government and ministerial-level representatives are called to attend COP10 to attest their commitment to biodiversity policies. In light of the United Nations General Assembly designating the year 2010 as the International Year of Biodiversity, various public awareness-raising activities must be promoted, including cultural measures such as music and *manga*/comics.

#### Research, development, and technology dissemination

- (17) Research must be undertaken on policies, mechanisms, actions, traditional knowledge, and technology through collaboration among in particular research institutes in Asia building upon Asia's policy and institutional mechanisms, challenges and ecological and socio-economic conditions.

International and regional collaboration

- (18) It is vital to promote international and regional collaboration to advance biodiversity policies, measures, and activities. Regional and international collaboration must be catalyzed and facilitated by various regional and international organizations and fora. In addition, these organizations and fora must further mainstream biodiversity-related components in their portfolios. Financing mechanisms for biodiversity need to be reinforced for effective implementation of biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. Consideration should also be given to an idea of establishing an Asian regional fund to support specific programmes and activities at local, national, and regional levels.