
Ministerial Declaration on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific Bangkok, 16 October 1990

1. We, the Ministers of the ESCAP region, representing more than half of the global population, met at Bangkok, Thailand, from 15 to 16 October 1990 at the Ministerial-level Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific;
2. Recalling resolution 267 (XLIV) of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific adopted at Jakarta in 1988 and the United Nations Development Programme Governing Council decision 90/20 adopted at its 38th meeting in 1990;
3. Recalling also the United Nations General Assembly resolution 44/228 on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be held in 1992 and recognizing the importance accorded to regional inputs to that Conference;
4. Deeply concerned about the threat to environmentally sound and sustainable development due to environmental degradation and the depletion of natural resources in the ESCAP region and other adverse conditions, as highlighted in the *Report on the State of the Environment for Asia and the Pacific 1990* such as Forest destruction, desertification, watershed degradation, soil erosion, waterlogging and salinization, flooding, destruction of mangroves and corals, loss of biological diversity and pollution of air and water, as well as the ozone layer depletion and the potential rise in sea level and other expected impact of climate change associated with the emission of the greenhouse gases;
5. Reiterating that poverty, human health, population pressure and environmental degradation are closely interrelated and that environmental protection in the developing countries of the region must, in this context, be viewed as an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it;
6. Affirming that the major cause of the continuing deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of production and consumption, particularly in industrialized countries, and that the responsibility for containing, reducing and eliminating environmental damage must be borne by the countries causing such damage, must be in relation to the damage caused and must be in accordance with their respective capabilities and responsibilities;
7. Recognizing the urgent need for all countries to intensify efforts to protect and improve the quality of the environment at national, sub-regional, regional and global levels, wherever relevant, by adopting an approach in which economic growth should be directed towards environmentally sound and sustainable development;

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8. Recognizing further that the developing countries have specific concerns and needs which should be given special attention in any global effort for the protection of the environment;
 9. Acknowledging the need to address the special environmental problems of relevant small island developing countries of the region;
 10. Stressing that the current international economic situation should be improved in order to remove obstacles hampering environmentally sound and sustainable development, particularly in the developing countries with special attention to the least developing countries of the region;
 11. Realizing that the majority of the developing countries in the region lack the necessary financial and other resources and technologies for them to participate effectively in the global and regional efforts for environmental protection;
 12. Recognizing further the diverse economic conditions and consequently, varying technological, financial and other capabilities of the countries in the region, and the opportunities arising therefrom for strengthening regional co-operation to achieve environmentally sound and sustainable development;
 13. Reaffirming the objectives in the operative paragraphs 16 (j) and (m) of Part I of the United Nations General Assembly resolution 44/228 on the need for new and additional financial resources and on favourable access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies, in particular to the developing countries, for achieving environmentally sound and sustainable development;

We, the Ministers:

14. Commit ourselves to adopt an integrated approach to environment and development, and wherever possible and in accordance with our priorities and capabilities to incorporate environmental considerations into economic planning with a view to effecting the co-ordinated development of our economies and environment;
15. Believe that all economic and social development activities should meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs;
16. Affirm the crucial importance of maintaining the proper balance between economic development, population growth, the rational use of natural resources and environmental protection;
17. Urge countries in the region to adopt effective and sound population policies and accompanying measures for that purpose;
18. Affirm that States have the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their social, economic and environmental policies, ensuring that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other states or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction;
19. Believe that, to achieve sustainable development, policies must be based on the precautionary principle;
20. Affirm the important role of science and technology in economic development, environmental protection, promotion of human health and population planning, especially the popularization and wider use of related science and technologies, in particular in the rural areas in the developing countries, in achieving this goal;

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21. Emphasize the need for all countries and relevant international agencies to intensify their cooperation to support and assist the developing countries of the region in such efforts;
 22. Welcome and pledge our full support for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be held in Brazil in 1992 and call for measures to ensure the full and active participation of ESCAP members and associate members in the preparatory process for the Conference, in particular the developing countries;
 23. Recognize that adequate resources will be needed for the implementation of activities agreed to in this Declaration, and urge all donor governments and agencies to make appropriate voluntary contributions so that actions identified can be implemented;
 24. Welcome the important ongoing work of ESCAP on the elaboration of a Regional Strategy on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development by taking into consideration existing sub-regional and national strategies and call for its early completion;
 25. Request the ESCAP secretariat to convene meeting(s) of representatives of members and associate members of the Commission before the second meeting of UNCED Preparatory Committee to follow up our decisions, particularly to elaborate a Regional Strategy on Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development and to continue preparation of the regional contribution to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development;
 26. Request also the Executive Secretary of ESCAP, in consultation with representatives from the relevant United Nations agencies and bodies, multilateral funding organizations and governments to find ways and means to enhance effectiveness of co-operation and co-ordination in the development and implementation of regional environment and development activities as envisaged by this Declaration;
 27. Affirm the right of individuals and non-governmental organizations to be informed of environmental problems relevant to them, to have necessary access to information, and to participate in the formulation and implementation of decisions likely to affect their environment;
 28. Recommend the strengthening of environment related activities of non-governmental organizations, the promotion of public awareness and people's participation in environmental protection and management activities and in this context welcome all UN initiatives which seek to assist media, NGOs and community groups targetting the poor;
 29. Reaffirm the necessity to promote environmental education, especially of the younger generations, as well as other measures to increase awareness of the value of the environment;
 30. Welcome and encourage the efforts to establish research, training, policy and other institutes/centres dealing with environment and development activities with a view to promoting exchange of information, technical assistance and regional co-operation for activities relevant to environmentally sound and sustainable development, and agree that the ESCAP should play an important role to promote the formulation of a regional network of such institutes/centres;
 31. Welcome the participation of the Asia-Pacific UNDP Regional Resident Representatives at this Conference which will enable them to better assist in the effective follow-up activities;
 32. Further request the Executive Secretary of ESCAP to keep the progress of implementation of this Declaration under review and report to the annual sessions of the Commission.

SOURCE: Ministry of the Environment, Republic of Singapore.