

CONNECTIONS

UNESCAP in North-East Asia

April - May 2012, issue 1



Welcome to the first issue of **Connections!** This new publication of the Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia (SRO-ENE) is intended to share with you information about ESCAP and SRO-ENE in a timely manner. Our goal is to produce this web-only publication every two months.

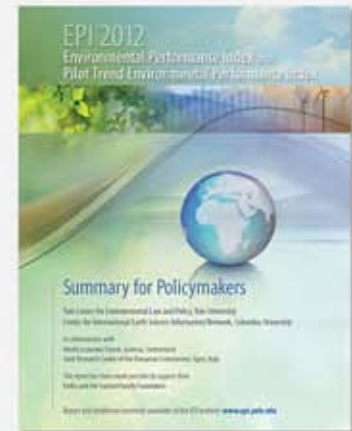
Since its inauguration on 17 May 2010, the SRO-ENE has published four Newsletters on a semi-regular basis. The Newsletters served as a key outreach tool to raise awareness among existing and potential partners regarding the SRO-ENE and its areas of work, especially as we were developing a fully functioning website. For this purpose, each issue of the Newsletter had a thematic focus, carefully selected to target certain events that the SRO-ENE was involved in. For example, the third Newsletter, which focused on youth issues, was prepared so that it could be distributed in time for the 1st Subregional Youth Forum in August 2011 organized by our Office. Also, some of the Newsletters were translated into four subregional languages to maximize reach.

But it soon became clear that a newsletter that focuses on one theme will not serve the purpose of keeping you regularly informed on the activities of our Office. Granted, we do issue other outreach materials including factsheets, posters, and brochures of SRO-ENE as well as of North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) on an ad-hoc basis. However, it was quite costly to print and post hard copies in multiple languages.

For all these reasons and taking into account the expanding work programme of our Office, we are moving to this new format. But our determination of doing everything we possibly can in making our Office the hub of multilateralism in the region did not change. Our hope is that, as with our other publications, we succeed in keeping you well informed of the pressing matters concerning inclusive and sustainable development for all. As always we welcome your feedback.

Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2012: Subregional summary

The Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy (Yale University) and the Center for International Earth Science Information Network (Columbia University) recently published their EPI 2012 report. Subregional countries depicted mixed performance in this index, which consists of 10 different categories (e.g. air pollution, water resources, biodiversity, climate change, etc), with the following rankings: China (116), Japan (23), Mongolia (107), the Republic of Korea (43) and the Russian Federation (106). For more information on EPI, please visit <http://epi.yale.edu>.



Rio+20: Subregional perspective



RIO+20
United Nations
Conference on
Sustainable
Development

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) will be held on 20-22 June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil to mark the 20th anniversary of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and the 10th anniversary of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg. With the two main themes dedicated to (a) a green economy in the context of sustainable development poverty eradication; and (b) the institutional framework for sustainable development - the Conference will discuss the new architecture for sustainable development in light of addressing the main priority areas that include decent jobs, energy, sustainable cities, food security and sustainable agriculture, water, oceans and disaster preparedness.

SRO-ENEA contributed to consolidating the subregional message to Rio+20 through a special session held during the 16th Senior Officials Meeting of NEASPEC (October 2011), which produced a Chair's Summary, and through the 1st UNESCAP Subregional Forum for Youth Participation in Policy-Making (August 2011), which came up with a Subregional Youth Statement for Rio+20. Both contributions were submitted as inputs to the Regional Preparatory Meeting for Asia and the Pacific and to the global Zero draft of the outcome document titled "The Future We Want".

Looking at this Zero draft document, yet to be finalized and adopted by the Conference, it is expected that the member States will discuss the provision of new investments, new skills formation, technology development, transfer and access, and capacity building for achieving progress on building green economies. Based on the successful existing initiatives in East and North-East Asia, our subregion can support this process on regional and global scales, perhaps first by setting an example of subregional cooperation.

Moreover, the meeting is expected to produce a roadmap for measuring a global progress on sustainable development up to 2030. In this regard, the role of ESCAP in promoting sustainable development through capacity building, exchange of information and experiences and providing expertise in the Asia-Pacific region (and its subregions) will be of utmost importance.



Activities

UNCITRAL Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific co-located with SRO-ENEA

On 10 January 2012, the UNCITRAL Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific was launched in Songdo, Incheon with the attendance of honoured guests including Patricia O'Brien, the Legal Counsel of the United Nations and Song Yong-gil, Mayor of Incheon. At the opening ceremony, SRO-ENEA warmly welcomed the new member of UN, which will be co-locating with SRO-ENEA on 17th Floor of the Meet-you-all Tower in Songdo. The Director of SRO-ENEA, Kilaparti Ramakrishna, also participated as a presenter in the regional workshop following the launch. As the core legal body of the United Nations system in the field of international trade law, UNCITRAL was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1966 in Vienna to promote the progressive harmonization and unification of international trade law. The new regional centre will take the central role of supporting legal activities of developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region and will be headed by Luca Castellani.



Yeosu Expo Preparation



For the upcoming EXPO 2012 Yeosu Korea in May, the Third International Planning Meeting was held in Seoul and Yeosu, Republic of Korea during 7-9 February 2012. The EXPO will run from 12 May to 12 August with the main theme of “The Living Ocean and Coast: Diversity of Resources and Sustainable Activities”. More than twenty UN entities, including specialized agencies, funds, programmes and Secretariat offices, will be participating in the UN Pavilion under the banner of “One UN”.

SRO-ENEA represented ESCAP in the planning meeting and works together with other UN offices in conceptualizing the involvement and engagement of all UN entities with the theme of “Ocean Connections”. Preceded by a life-size image of the UN Secretary-General, the UN Pavilion will consist of three areas to display UN’s activities on water conservation.

North-East Asia Network (NEAN)

The 11th North-East Asian Network (NEAN) Forum was held in Yonsei University in the Republic of Korea on 9 February 2012 with the main theme of “Shifting World Order: Northeast Asia’s New Direction”. Kilaparti Ramakrishna, Director of SRO-ENEA, gave congratulatory remarks at the Gala Night of NEAN Forum and delivered greetings to the participants. In his message, he mentioned the importance of the development pattern of the subregion having significant implications for the global sustainable development in the context of inclusiveness and environmental sustainability. First established under Yonsei University Leadership Center in 2001, NEAN is an international forum that aims to foster essential partnership among Northeast Asian countries by bringing together students from around the world and offering them an opportunity to develop significant diplomatic capacity.





Activities

Towards a Binding Legal Instrument for Climate Change



During a visit to the [ESCAP Pacific Office](#) in Suva, Fiji, the Director of SRO-ENEAA – Kilaparti Ramakrishna gave a presentation on the topic “Towards a Binding Legal Instrument for Climate Change”. The seminar was organized jointly by UN Resident Coordinator, UNDP and ESCAP Pacific Office and attendees included government officials, members of regional and international organizations as well as diplomatic corps based in Suva.

Breakfast Meeting with the Secretary-General

During the Secretary-General’s visit to the Republic of Korea for the Nuclear Security Summit, the SRO-ENEAA in conjunction with the Office of the Secretary-General organized a breakfast meeting for representatives of UN offices in Seoul and Incheon. More than 10 different offices were represented at this meeting where the SG talked about his five-year action plan for his second term in office.



Other Activities



On 7 March, Mark Tokola, Deputy Chief of Mission of US Embassy to Korea visited our office. We organized a dialogue between the Deputy Chief of Mission and all UN agencies in Incheon (ESCAP SRO-ENEAA and APCICT, UNISDR, and UNCITRAL). While the dialogue touched on US foreign policy in the subregion, it also introduced to the US Embassy the work programme of UN offices in Incheon. The dialogue has since led to the parties discussing possible collaboration in the area of disaster relief.

During the first quarter of 2012, a number of groups visited SRO-ENEAA office to exchange views on social and economic issues in the subregion. A number of presentations were given to local students:

- 9 January to Friends of the UN on “Prevention and Control of Dust and Sandstorms in North-East Asia” by Alisher Mamadzhanov
- 27 January to Friends of the UN on “Low Birthrate and Population Ageing” by Yuko Kitada
- 14 February to Friends of the UN on “Current Economic Issues on North-East Asia” by Yejin Ha
- 24 March to Ganghwa High School on “Work of United Nations” by Minkyung Hong (organized by Incheon Center for International Cooperation and Exchange)
- 30 March to Yonsei University students on “United Nations and UNESCAP” by Ka-Fa Wong

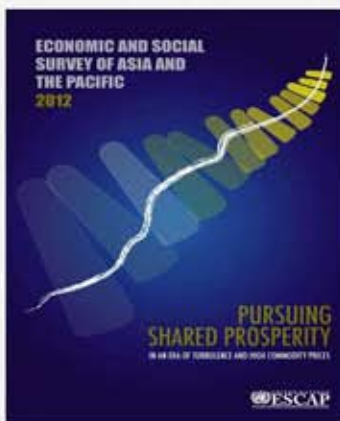


May 2012 ⇒ Capacity Building Training for Mongolian Experts in Eco-labeling

Japan, which established an eco-labeling scheme in the late 1980s, was the first country in North-East Asia to take initiatives in this area, followed by Republic of Korea in 1992 and China in 1993. Since then, the three countries have made remarkable progress in terms of the number of certified products and their share of the global market.

The Capacity Building Training for Mongolian Experts in Eco-labeling will be jointly organized by the SRO-ENEA, the Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism of Mongolia (MONET), Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MNCCI) on 1-3 May 2012 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, bringing together experts from China, Japan, Republic of Korea, and Russian Federation. The training aims to (1) raise awareness of Mongolian officials and experts on the overall framework of eco-labeling programme in China, Japan, Republic of Korea, and Russian Federation, (2) review eco-labeling initiatives in Mongolia, and (3) identify potential areas of collaboration on eco-labeling programme.

May 2012 ⇒ Launch of the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific



ESCAP is to issue its annual publication entitled “Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2012” on 10 May. This flagship publication of ESCAP will be launched through the media in over 30 locations around the world. The launch in the Republic of Korea will take place in conjunction with Global Green Growth Summit at the Lotte Hotel, Seoul. Prominent experts, including Prof. Jeffrey Sachs and Dr. Jong-Wha Lee, will join the event to examine emerging socioeconomic challenges for the Asia Pacific region and, in particular, the Republic of Korea for the coming year and discuss policy options for navigating the increasingly turbulent economic environment.

The North-East Asia will host country launches in China, Japan, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation as following:

Country	Location	Date
China	Beijing	10 May
Japan	Tokyo	10 May
Mongolia	Ulaanbaatar	10 May
Republic of Korea	Seoul	10 May
Russian Federation	Moscow	11 May



May 2012 ⇒ Sixty-eighth Session of the Commission

The 68th session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific will be held at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok from 17 to 23 May 2012. The following events will be held during the ministerial segment: a ministerial round table on the theme of the 68th session, namely "Enhancing regional economic integration in Asia and the Pacific: Towards a comprehensive framework", on Monday, 21 May 2012; and a high-level panel on "Steering inclusive development through global turbulence and volatility" on Tuesday, 22 May 2012.



June 2012 ⇒ International Symposium on Population Ageing and Fostering Progress of Societies



SRO-ENEA, in collaboration with the National Population and Family Planning Commission of China, will convene the "International Symposium on Population Ageing and Fostering Progress of Societies" in June 2012. As the countries of North-East Asia undergo population ageing at the fastest pace in human history, this symposium will discuss the role of older persons in the country's holistic development, not only economic prosperity but also the well-being of every citizen. Governmental officials from the ministries as well as experts from academia and civil society are expected to attend, to share and review the available tools for constructing a "better society for all" in the face of population ageing.

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