

CONNECTIONS

Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia
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Director's Message

Dr. Kilaparti Ramakrishna

We are ushering in the New Year at a time that could justly be called the "defining moment" for our subregion. Power transitions in the countries hold out the possibility to resolve long-standing differences and to chart a stable and prosperous future and give multilateralism a chance in the subregion.

The follow up to Rio+20 together with consultations on post-2015 development agenda are the centers of discussion for many. Reviewing the year 2012 and looking forward to this year, below are some of the key achievements and upcoming plans of SRO-ENEA: Children and youth are recognized by member States as a major group for engagement, both in Rio+20 outcome document and in the formulation of post-2015 development agenda.

SRO-ENEA organized a North-East Asian Youth Conference on Post-2015 Development Agenda with UNDP Seoul Policy Centre and others. The voices of youths from different walks of life were reflected in the Youth Declaration which was handed to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea as an input to the report being prepared by the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Post-2015 Agenda.

Population ageing is increasingly a social issue for many of the subregion countries. The outcome document of the Asian Symposium on Building Sustainable Ageing Societies in July 2012, jointly organized with the National Population and Family Planning Commission of China, called for a knowledge sharing platform on the same theme. The symposium was attended by 110 participants including senior governmental officials and representatives of intergovernmental and civil society organizations from over 15 countries in East Asia. In 2013-2014, we plan to roll out this knowledge sharing platform.



[Dr. Ramakrishna with H.E. Ms. Cui Li, Vice minister of National Population & Family Planning Commission, China]

SRO-ENEA has been carrying out a series of activities in the area of trade and transport facilitation. Improving connectivity and access to markets is a critical element of narrowing the development gap among the economies of the subregion. In 2012, building on previous commitments made by key stakeholders, SRO-ENEA brought together experts from the quarantine and inspection agencies in the subregion to share experiences and identify key areas in which capacity training would be beneficial for trade inspections. Based on these results, SRO-ENEA has started working on facilitating the provision of necessary capacity

building to quarantine and inspection officers in Mongolia. At the same time, together with the Greater Tumen Initiatives (GTI), we started a public-private forum to more actively promote dialogue and cooperation on trade and transport facilitation issues among countries in the subregion. Governmental and non-governmental stakeholders participating in the forum welcomed this initiative and requested the forum to be a yearly event.

In the area of environment, we have taken many steps to expand the scope of the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC) and to foster collaboration with other relevant existing mechanisms. As the secretariat for NEASPEC, SRO-ENEA continues to assist member States through knowledge sharing, capacity building and field projects on the ground. Some of the highlights of NEASPEC programme are captured in the next section where we report on the 17th Senior Officials Meeting.

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K. Ramakrishna

17th Senior Officials Meeting of NEASPEC

(North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation)

The seventeenth Senior Officials Meeting of North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (SOM-17), organized by SRO-ENEAC as its secretariat and generously hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China in Chengdu, was successfully held on 20-21 December 2012.

The meeting served as a key environmental dialogue forum in North-East Asia by having over 50 delegates from all 6 member States and international agencies including UNEP, UNECE, East Asia Acid Deposition Network in East Asia (EANET), Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI), and Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP). In particular, national delegates consisted of various line ministries and specialized agencies which significantly helped the expansion of NEASPEC national partners.



Member States reiterated their commitments to address environmental challenges in the region through close cooperation under the programme and see it as a comprehensive and unique mechanism for promoting sustainable development in the subregion.

The meeting supported to continue existing programmes on transboundary air pollution, nature conservation in transboundary areas (with focus on Amur tiger and leopard) and dust and sandstorms while specific activities will be further

Adopted new project @ SOM-17

: Launch of the North-East Asian Marine Protected Areas (MPA) Network

formulated/elaborated during 2013. In addition, the meeting also endorsed proposals from the secretariat of new initiatives including launching a marine protected areas network, protecting the key habitats of migratory birds, and launching the information platform for low-carbon cities.

Member States recognized the overall progress that NEASPEC has made in the context of programme and institutional development, and recognized the need to build on this momentum to further strengthen subregional environmental cooperation. This expansion also means the consolidation of SRO-ENEAC's status in the subregion as the hub for subregional environmental cooperation, and as a key vehicle for simultaneously addressing subregion-specific priorities and global concerns.

The Meeting reviewed the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference and its implications for NEASPEC. The Meeting came to a general consensus on the need for the implementation of the Rio+20 outcomes at regional, subregional and national levels in which NEASPEC can play a very unique role by elaborating its existing programmes in the context of the outcomes and developing new innovative ways within its mandate.

Further details of the meeting can be found on <http://www.neaspec.org/>



Activities

UN Climate Change Conference (COP-18)

26 November- 8 December 2012, Doha, Qatar

Kilaparti Ramakrishna, Director of SRO-ENEA, participated in the 18th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP 18) on behalf of ESCAP. Some of the key decisions taken by the Parties in Doha include; the establishment of the independent secretariat of the Green Climate Fund in Korea and the extension of the work programme on long-term finance for one year so that developed country Parties could identify pathways for scaling up climate finance to USD 100 billion by 2020. The panel also agreed that the Second Commitment Period will begin on 1 January 2013 until 31 December 2020. While all of the decisions taken by the Parties are important, the big thing that Doha will be remembered for is the decision reached to enhance gender balance in climate change negotiations.



Consultation meeting between SRO-ENEA and MOFAT, RoK

11 December 2012, Seoul, Republic of Korea



[Dr. Ramakrishna and Director-General Han, MOFAT, Republic of Korea]

An one hour consultation meeting was held in Seoul between the SRO-ENEA and the International Economic Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Mr. Han, Dong-man, Director-General for the Bureau chaired the meeting. SRO-ENEA took the opportunity to brief the Bureau of its work programme in 2012 and the plan for 2013. During the meeting, several areas including energy security, Rio+20 follow up as well as post 2015 development agenda were identified as possible topics for collaboration. The meeting was also attended by colleagues from ESCAP-APCICT office and it was followed by lunch where over 20 colleagues from the three offices networked.

Regional Consultation on the Post-2015 Development Agenda

13-14 December 2012, Bali, Indonesia

Organized by the Government of Indonesia, the meeting brought together senior UN staff, academics and stakeholders from the Asia-Pacific region to discuss the process, architecture and scope of goals in a post-2015 development agenda. Kilaparti Ramakrishna, Director of SRO-ENEA, represented ESCAP in the UN delegation.

The meeting was opened by the Indonesia President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. President Yudhoyono together with Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and UK Prime Minister



Dr. Ramakrishna with Pak Kuntoro Mangkusubroto, Minister & Head of Indonesian President's Delivery Unit

David Cameron are co-chairs of a 24-member High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. This regional meeting has sessions addressing: measures of equity and social inclusion; job creation and poverty alleviation; and national and global governance of sustainable development, paving way towards more meaningful discussions and exchanges through which the post-2015 development agenda will be agreed upon.



Activities

Building capacity on trade and investment facilitation in North-East Asia

20 December 2012, Beijing, China

The GTI Capacity Building Workshop on Trade and Investment Facilitation in North-East Asia was organized by the Greater Tumen Secretariat with support from the Ministry of Commerce of China, ESCAP, UNDP China and GIZ. Private and public stakeholders on trade facilitation from the sub-region met to discuss proposals and recommendations for improving trade facilitation in North-East Asia. SRO-ENEA participated in the Workshop and presented a proposal and outline for a joint ESCAP/GTI study on trade facilitation in the region. The Governments of China and the Republic of Korea as well as UNDP China and GIZ expressed interest in supporting this joint study.



17th Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of NEASPEC

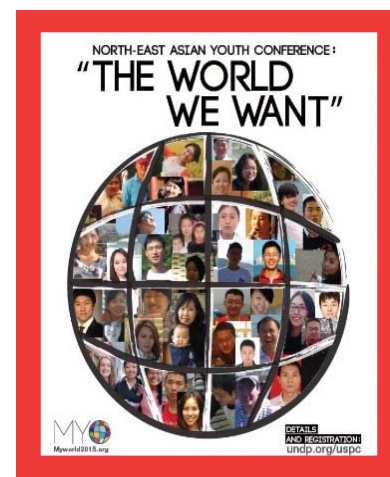
20-21 December 2012, Chengdu, China

The Meeting was organized by the SRO-ENEA and generously hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China. The Meeting was attended by delegations from all six member States. Since SOM-13 (2008), it's been the first time for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to attend the SOM. The Meeting recognized the overall progress that the Secretariat has made in the context of institutional development and expansion of the activities since its relocation from the ESCAP Headquarters in Bangkok, Thailand, to SRO-ENEA in Incheon, Republic of Korea in 2010. (Please read **Highlights** on Page 2 for more details)

Subregional Youths promote inclusive society for the post-2015 world

7-9 January 2013, Seoul, Republic of Korea

The Youth Conference was co-organized by SRO-ENEA together with UNDP Seoul Policy Centre, UN Global Compact and Korea University. As MDGs target date of 2015 fast approaches, the development community all over the world is engaging in discussions about the "World We Want Post-2015". Fifty-one youths from China, Japan, Mongolia and the Republic of Korea gathered in Seoul on 7-9 January 2013, and described the kind of world they want, as well as identified ways to make the ideal world a reality. SRO-ENEA brought 17 youth from various social groups including youths with disabilities, sexual minorities, ethnic minorities, refugees, domestic migrant workers, and educated but underemployed youths to ensure voices from different life experiences are heard. The Youth Conference produced a Youth Declaration which was received by governmental representatives, including the Minister of Foreign



Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Kim Sung-hwan, Minister from the Japanese Embassy in Seoul, Mr. Hirohisa Soma, and Mr. Purevdorj Erkhembulgan from the Mongolian Ministry of Education, Culture and Science in Ulaanbaatar. Minister Kim, a member of the Secretary-General's High Level Panel on Post-2015, promised the youth participants that he would do his best to reflect North-East Asian youth views in the report which the High Level Panel will submit to the Secretary-General in mid-2013.



Upcoming Events

SRO-ENEA Planning Session on 2013 Work Programme

1 February 2013, Incheon, Republic of Korea

SRO-ENEA will hold a one-day Planning Session to discuss the work programme of 2013. The aim of the Planning Session is to map out activities and deliverables for the year and to strategically realign the Office's work priorities in response to evolving subregional issues and challenges. The Planning Session is expected to produce (a) strategic direction and goals of SRO-ENEA for 2013 and (b) a clear set of results oriented activities for 2013.



Consultation Meeting on Short-Lived Climate Pollutants in North-East Asia

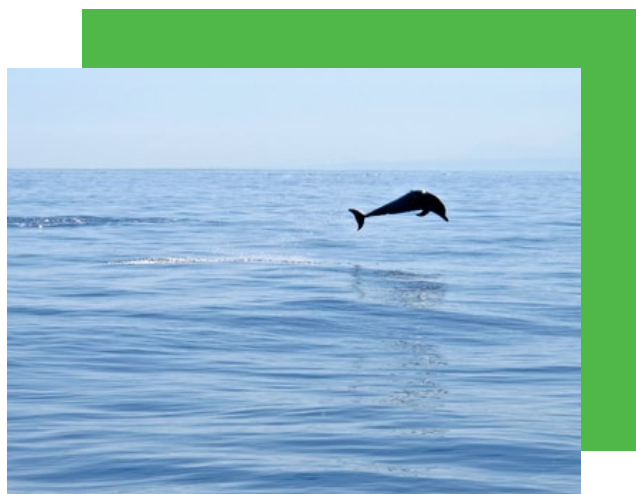
7 February 2013, Incheon, Republic of Korea

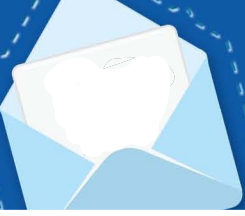
The consultation meeting on short-lived climate pollutants (SLCP) will be jointly held by UNEP and SRO-ENEA on 7 February 2013 in Incheon, Republic of Korea. The meeting aims to (1) review global scientific and policy processes for mitigating SLCP including black carbon, methane, HFCs and tropospheric ozone; (2) assess trends and impacts of SLCP in the subregion; (3) identify the role of North-East Asia in global initiatives for assessing and mitigating SLCP; (4) discuss the role of UNEP and SRO-ENEA in facilitating and supporting subregional actions on SLCP.

Workshop on Marine Biodiversity Conservation and Marine Protected Areas in the Northwest Pacific

13-14 March, Toyama, Japan

SRO-ENEA and the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP) of UNEP will jointly organize a one and half day workshop on marine biodiversity conservation and marine protected areas (MPA) in the Northwest Pacific. The second day will be led by NEASPEC Secretariat and the workshop is expected to identify priority needs and areas for subregional cooperation on MPA and discuss the operation of the North-East Asia MPA Network focusing on its specific programmes and operational modality.





Other News

SRO-ENEA at the Model UN Leaders Summit

Andrea Goldstein and Ka-Fa Wong, Senior Economic Affairs Officer and Programme Officer from SRO-ENEA respectively, presented to participants of the MUN Leaders Summit the work of ESCAP and how to join the UN. The MUN Leaders Summit was organized by Chosun Education at Incheon Songdo State of University New York (SUNY) Campus from 4-6 January 2013 for youths who are interested in joining the UN or other international organizations. SRO-ENEA took up the two-hour afternoon session on 4 January to talk and interact with students. The young people were excited to be able to ask serving UN staff members questions about UN work as well as joining the Organization.



Other outreach activities

On 16 January 2013, 40 students from the University of Incheon visited SRO-ENEA. Yuko Kitada, Associate Social Affairs Officer gave a presentation about the work of the office and the United Nations. Also on different occasions, Carrie Hong, Yejin Ha and Sangmin Nam from SRO-ENEA were invited to give lectures about the United Nations and the office to high school and university students.

Visit by Japanese Embassy in Republic of Korea

Mr. Hirohisa Soma, Minister, Economic Affairs of the Japanese Embassy in the Republic of Korea, together with Mr. Daisuke Nakajima (first secretary, Economic Section) and Mr. Takashi Toda (third secretary, Economic Section) visited SRO-ENEA on 23 January 2013, to learn more about the work programme of SRO-ENEA.



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NEASPEC Website: <http://www.neaspec.org>
Facebook: **United Nations in East and North-East Asia**
Twitter: **@UN_EastAsia**

UN Community in Songdo kick-starts the new year together

UN offices located in Songdo, including SRO-ENEA, UNCITRAL, APCICT, DESA-OSD and ISDR gathered on 11 January 2013 to celebrate the new year together. The offices renewed their commitment to work closely and build synergies whenever possible.



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