



19 November 2010

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Intergovernmental Consultation Meeting

22-23 November 2010

Incheon

**INTRODUCTION TO THE MANDATE AND PROGRAMME OF THE  
SUBREGIONAL OFFICE FOR EAST AND NORTH-EAST ASIA**

(Item 4 of the provisional agenda)

*Note by the secretariat*

**SUMMARY**

The present document summarizes the background and rationale behind the establishment of the Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia (SRO-ENEA) and the key challenges and responses in the priority work areas identified by the member States. The SRO-ENEA together with other ESCAP subregional offices is intended to strengthen subregional cooperation within a regional framework by, among other things, (a) providing regular analysis of the socio-economic trends and priorities of states covered by the offices, (b) ensuring a balanced delivery of technical assistance through more in-depth and focused capacity-building activities, (c) Strengthening further working relations with multilateral organizations and other relevant partners, (d) supporting intergovernmental processes, and (e) acting as a knowledge hub for gathering and disseminating development policy-related good practices.

Priority work areas of the SRO-ENEA identified by member States in the course of 2009-2010 cover the followings:

- (a) Sustainable development, taking into account the green growth approach, and energy efficiency, including the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC);
- (b) Information and communications technology, disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management;
- (c) Poverty reduction, including food security; and
- (d) Infrastructure, trade and transport facilitation, including connectivity.

*The meeting may wish to provide the secretariat with guidance to further refine work areas and modalities of the SRO-ENE with specific emphasis on multilateral cooperation, capacity building and interdisciplinary approach towards achieving MDGs and sustainable development.*

## **I. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SRO-ENEA**

1. The mandate of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is to promote regional cooperation for inclusive economic and social development in the Asian and Pacific region in order to meet the regions needs and priorities. The role of ESCAP, as a regional development arm of the United Nations Secretariat, is to support its membership through its analytical, normative and technical cooperation work and by supporting intergovernmental processes, taking into account the development priorities and changing needs of the Asian and Pacific region. The key objectives of ESCAP are: (a) to promote the regional implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals; and (b) to support inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in the region by helping to bridge economic, social and environmental gaps.

2. The United Nations General Assembly at its sixth-third session in December 2008, adopted resolution 63/260 that stresses the importance of improving the effective and efficient delivery of UN mandates on development-related activities and building a coherent vision of the Secretariat's role in the global development architecture. In this context, the General Assembly approved additional regular budget resources for the establishment and operation of three new ESCAP subregional offices—East and North-East Asia, North and Central Asia, and South and South-West Asia—under ESCAP subprogramme 8, Subregional activities for development. Subsequently, the programme of work for 2010-2011, including subprogramme 8, was endorsed by the Commission at its sixth-fifth session, in April 2009, to strengthen the subregional presence of ESCAP.

3. Subsequently, an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) and an Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Meeting (IGM) on New ESCAP Subregional Offices held in October 2009 and March 2010 further discussed the roles and priority areas of work of the Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia (SRO-ENEA).

4. ESCAP SRO-ENEA was inaugurated on 17 May 2010 in Incheon, the Republic of Korea, in order to address subregion-specific development priorities, to promote knowledge sharing and subregional cooperation for advancing sustainable development, to strengthen partnerships with civil society and other key development partners, and to further enhance the relevance of the Commission's work in the subregion. Member States through the consultation process of the EGM and IGM recommended the SRO-ENEA to support the following thematic priority areas, as endorsed at the Commission at its sixty-sixth session in May 2010:

- (a) Sustainable development, taking into account the green growth approach and energy efficiency, including the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC);
- (b) Information and communications technology, disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management;
- (c) Poverty reduction, including food security; and
- (d) Infrastructure, trade and transport facilitation, including connectivity.

5. Together with the Subregional Office for North and Central Asia in Almaty and the Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia in New Delhi, the SRO-ENEA aims to undertake the following roles.

(a) Support the work of the Commission with regular *analysis of the socio-economic trends and priorities of countries in the subregions*, by serving as a link between the subregions and Commission headquarters. By spearheading and ensuring a more balanced delivery of technical assistance. Acting as the Commission's implementation arm in the various subregions, the new subregional offices would promote and support specific subregional priorities and programmes, with each office concentrating on the priority areas relevant to members States within their respective subregion;

(b) *Supporting intergovernmental processes, building partnerships*, and networking with other relevant actors and institutions. Including other regional and subregional intergovernmental bodies, to promote subregional cooperation within a regional framework;

(c) Operating as subregional *centers for knowledge management*, establishing close working relations with United Nations country teams within the subregions, and promoting the coordination of United Nations system activities at the subregional level. The subregional offices would build synergies and foster cooperation at the subregional level between United Nations agencies, drawing on the strong regional presence of the Commission, its wide-ranging technical skills, and convening power.

## II. BACKGROUND OF PRIORITY AREAS

6. **Sustainable development, taking into account the green growth approach, and energy efficiency, including the North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC):** East and North-East Asia produced 62% of total carbon emissions from the Asia and the Pacific region in 2007 and has four member countries (China, Japan, ROK and the RF) ranked as the top ten emitters of greenhouse gases (GHG). This subregion also plays a significant role in boosting the global demand for fossil fuels and mineral resources, as three of the top five global importers of oil are in North-East Asia. Furthermore, China accounted for 80% of the annual increase in global demand for mineral resources during 2003-2008. As a result most member countries have become more proactive in pursuing policy measures that target both reducing greenhouse gases emissions and improving energy and resource efficiency. Concrete examples include the low carbon, green growth policy of the Republic of Korea and circular economy/ resource-saving society of China. In accordance with the Copenhagen Accord, most countries in East and North-East Asia have put forward a national target for mitigating greenhouse gases emissions by 2020. Japan and the Russian Federation plan to cut their emissions by 15~25% and 25% respectively, from the 1990 levels. China and the Republic of Korea plan to reduce carbon intensity of economy by 40~45% and to reduce business-as-usual emissions by 30% from 2005 levels. Mongolia has a comprehensive sectoral target; however, it does not have a quantified national target.

7. Improving energy efficiency is a key to mitigating greenhouse gas emissions as well as improving energy security and eco-efficiency (resource efficiency) of the economy. The need for improving energy efficiency is particularly important for East and North-East Asia, as it accounted to a large portion (28%) of the world energy consumption in 2007. This large world energy consumption figure is in part due to both its economic size and inefficiency of energy use. Consequently, most member states have recently strengthened policy measures for improving energy efficiency.

China has targeted substantial reductions in energy consumption per dollar of GDP as a key goal in its 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plans. The Russian Federation introduced an energy labeling system by enacting the law on “Energy Saving and Energy Efficiency Increase” in November 2009. Japan, Mongolia, and the Republic of Korea has also set up plans for energy efficiency as an integral part of its national plan on climate change.

8. Concerning energy cooperation in East and North-East Asia, ESCAP has been providing secretariat support to the Intergovernmental Collaborative Mechanism on Energy Cooperation in North-East Asia (ENEA) established in November 2005. ENEA aims to increase the supply of energy in the North-East Asian subregion (lessening its dependence on energy imports from outside the subregion), to optimize the economy and efficiency of the supply and use of energy; and to minimize the environmental impact of energy production and consumption through an improved energy mix.

9. North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation (NEASPEC), the only subregional environmental mechanism covering all six states in East and North-East Asia, was established as a comprehensive mechanism for intergovernmental cooperation. Upon the request of member States, ESCAP has been acting as an interim secretariat, pending the final decision on the arrangement of the NEASPEC secretariat. Member States at the 15<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) in March 2010 recommended the SRO-ENEA to function as the secretariat for NEASPEC after a series of consultations on the proposal of the Republic of Korea for establishing and hosting the permanent secretariat in the country since the 12<sup>th</sup> SOM in 2005 and the review of priority work areas of the SRO-ENEA.

10. The relocation of the secretariat is expected to increase available human resources and enhance interactions with member states for the development of new joint initiatives and timely delivery of projects.

11. Joint initiatives of member States under NEASPEC have been considerably strengthened during the recent years. The current activity areas include transboundary air pollution, nature conservation in transboundary areas, dust and sandstorms (DSS), and the integration of environmental sustainability into economic growth.

12. **Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Disaster Risk Reduction:** ICT is an important tool for assisting in all stages of disaster risk reduction activities, which cover mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery from disasters. Those technologies include spatial information systems (such as information integration and analysis, disaster risk assessment and modeling, mitigation and response planning); remote sensing (monitoring and data gathering); the internet, websites and portals (information sharing, warehousing, knowledge hubs); communication systems (television, radio, satellite and cellular mobile, broadband); and ICT applications (disaster management systems).

13. In particular, ICT provides crucial support for the development of reliable early warning systems to ensure timely and understandable alerts to those at risk and supports the provision of assistance during or immediately after a disaster to protect life and meet the basic subsistence needs of those people affected. Regional/subregional cooperation is the key to expanding operational applications of relevant ICT tools for disaster risk reduction. Potential areas of cooperation include (1) developing and sharing infrastructures and resources through promoting multilateral emergency communication systems and mechanisms for sharing of space information,

(2) regional/subregional disaster information networks, (3) capacity-building for policy-makers, scientists, and technicians.

14. **Poverty Reduction:** East and North-East Asian is generally characterized as an economic powerhouse of the world. However, the same economic success which brought prosperity to the subregion has also brought new challenges. For example, income disparity within national borders (between rural and urban areas, as well as among the urban populations) and the disparity across the subregion have raised not only economic but also social concerns, especially with regards to social equity.

15. In terms of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), North-East Asia can be categorized as an “early achiever” in many of the indicators. However, further efforts are needed in other MDGs-related areas. For example, the maternal mortality rate for the DPRK is 370 out of every 100,000 live births, compared to 6 in Japan, 28 in Russian Federation, and 46 in Mongolia. HIV/AIDS continue to affect the states of the subregion in significant ways, including rising new infection rates and problems in ensuring access to treatment.

16. Other significant social and socio-economic challenges faced by the subregion are associated with ageing, rapid urbanization and industrialization, gender issues, youth unemployment, social health (high pressure and stress in society resulting in high suicide rate), domestic rural-to-urban migration, international economic migration, and protecting the human rights of vulnerable groups, including those of migrants, women, children, youth, elderly, disabled and ethnic minorities. It is important to acknowledge these groups as it is among these vulnerable groups that poverty is usually the most pressing concern.

17. Poverty reduction in East and North-East Asia, therefore, needs the social integration of vulnerable groups. The socio-economic differences among the national populations need to be leveled out, in order to achieve social equity and “a society for all”.

18. **Infrastructure, transport and trade facilitation:** With its economic size and high dependency on trade, East and North-East Asia shows increasing webs and volumes of trade among member states, its intra-regional trade accounts for over 35% of its international trade. In 2005, China became the largest trading partner of the ROK and the second largest trading partner of Japan. This remarkable growth in China’s two-way trade with the ROK and Japan has resulted in robust growth of economies in the subregion. The DPRK and Mongolia also depend on about two-thirds of their trade with China and ROK and China and the Russian Federation

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

[https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5\\_8031](https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_8031)

