

SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP: ASIA & PACIFIC REGIONAL MEETING

Facilitators: Lal Kurukulasuriya
 Maria Comino
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 Rapporteur: John A. Boyd

GOALS

- Improve environmental enforcement and compliance through improved networking.
- Learn to cooperate better within each country and then within the region.
- Gain knowledge of environmental issues.
- Identify key environmental players within countries and the region so that we are better able to share our resources, including technical skills and lessons learned.

1 INTRODUCTION

Questions presented by facilitators:

- What is meant by the term “networking”?
- What are the existing regional networks?
- How can we improve regional networking?
- What can we accomplish in the next couple of years?

Mr. Oposa suggested that networking needs to start at home and grow through national and regional networks. Mr. Kurukulasuriya suggested that we need to move from networks consisting mainly of addresses to organic networks. Ms. Comino suggested that we describe briefly the networks that currently exist in the region and improve networking within countries.

2 DISCUSSION SUMMARY

According to Mr. B. Sengupta, India faces several environmental problems including air and water pollution, hazardous waste disposal, waste management, solid waste disposal, ground water pollution, as well as maintaining its national forests. The judiciary is active, pollution is declining, and the amount of such pollu-

tants as nitrates and heavy metals is being reduced. Mr. Phung Van Vui told of how Vietnam faces many environmental problems ranging from pollution to lack of human and financial resources. Mr. Hua Wang of the Peoples Republic of China told of how the problems of China are similar to those just noted for India and Vietnam. Mr. Mas Santosa states that Indonesia confronts blue, green and brown environmental issues, most of which are caused by a lack of good governance. To improve environmental compliance and enforcement, Indonesia will need to rely on Civil Society, government, Parliament, NGOs.

According to Mr. Islam Heydayetul Chowdhury, Bangladesh faces many different environmental problems including air pollution from vehicles, industry and brick laying, solid waste disposal, waste water, arsenic in water, and lack of facilities to deal with environmental problems. Mr. Prasaniha Dias Abeyegunawardene told of how Sri Lanka has lost a great deal of its wetlands and forests due to a lack of sufficient institutional capacity. Mr. Narayan Belbase of Nepal and the Ford Foundation office in India told of how Nepal's problems fall under six headings

- deforestation;

- loss of biodiversity;
- loss of soil;
- water pollution;
- solid waste management;
- and ineffective coordination of environmental management.

Mr. Sadhu Sapkota of Nepal thinks that Nepal needs to control illegal logging and deal effectively with threats to its endangered species. Ms. Donna Campbell told of the significant environmental problem caused by Australia's waste management. Australia has substantially solved its point source pollution problems but now must deal effectively with diffuse sources of pollution such as runoff of waste from vehicles. Australia also faces significant problems arising from its dry climate. Dr. Lssa Ababneth feels that Jordan's water management is perhaps its most significant environmental problem. Mr. Ben David Izhak informed the participants of Israel who, like its neighbor to the east, faces significant water resource problems. Resolving the marine pollution problems of the Gulf of Aqaba has provided a significant opportunity for Israel to cooperate with Egypt and Jordan. In the Pacific, New Zealand confronts environmental problems concerning air pollution, waste disposal, disposal of waste in the context of values held by its indigenous peoples, water pollution including disposal of PCBs, and soil conservation, according to Mr. Michael Leroy-Dyson. Ms. Maria Camino of Australia: since Australia has such a dry climate, Australia needs to attempt a complete water cycle approach, including use of effluents

Mr. Lal Kurukulasuriya's description of existing regional networks included the South Asian Association for Regional Environmental Assessment Association (SAREAA), South Pacific Regional Environmental Association for Regional Cooperation Program (SPREP),

Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), South Asian Cooperative Environmental Program (SACEP) based in Columbo, the Asian Development Bank, International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICI-MOD)Dr. Ababneth noted the Regional Center for Environmental Health Activities (WHO) in Amman, Jordan. Mr. Sengupta pointed out that India deals effectively with environmental network problems by having State officials meet quarterly to discuss common problems. India also meets periodically with representatives of its neighbors to deal with environmental issues. Mr. Belbase noted that IUCN has regional offices which foster associations that deal with the preparation of environmental impact assessments. Mr. Enayet Ullah stressed the importance of local networks that deal with such significant issues as waste disposal.

Dr. Wang suggested that a website could help improve regional networking with thousands of individuals. Mr. Oposa suggested that we all create biographical sketches so that we are better able to work together as a regional network. Mr. Boyd suggested that this regional network should meet annually at a low cost, environmentally significant site so that we can discuss environmental issues of common concern. Mr. Oposa indicated that an exchange of views he recently had with a representative of Bangladesh on a recent ban of plastic bags in Bangladesh was very important and helpful to him. Mr. Kurukulasuriya suggested that a regional environmental website should be linked to significant other environmental websites, including government offices and the offices of NGOs. This could be accomplished through an improved INECE website. Mr. Boyd suggested that significant environmental laws, such as those dealing with water and air pollution, could also be referred to on these

websites to assist with compliance and enforcement efforts

Ms. Campbell emphasized the importance of focusing on compliance and enforcement issues, rather than the collection of laws. Mr. Chowdhury stressed the importance of sharing experiences in the enactment of new environmental legislation. Mr. LeRoy-Dyson suggested that the group attempt to find themes that would be of common interest such as dealing with governance, air pollution and waste management. Mr. Santosa indicated that Indonesia needs to learn more about how to decentralize the enforcement of environmental laws. Mr. Belbase suggested that funds might be sought for such purposes from international funding sources for future regional meetings. Mr. LeRoy-Dyson recommended that the group focus on issues related to obtaining voluntary compliance. Mr. Oposa suggested that each member of the group nominate another to join the group at the next regional meeting. Mr. Boyd suggested that the group might focus on how to improve compliance and enforcement in a particular country in the region, perhaps in the country where the group was meeting. Mr. Oposa suggested that the group would need a secretariat to facilitate future such regional meetings. Mr. Wang suggested that the existing INECE secretariat could provide necessary minimal secretariat and financial support and Mr. Santosa suggested that the group should be a meeting of the network and should include members of parliament and the judiciary so that opportunities for success would be enhanced

Mr. Enayet noted that many regional countries are not represented at this meeting and that the group should try to reach out to those missing countries. Mr. Oposa suggested that the group could attempt to develop techniques to assess existing capacity and gaps in such capacity. Experts could be invited to assist in this

effort and in developing indicators to measure success and failure. Mr. Kurukulasuriya stressed the importance of taking into account parallel efforts by other regional bodies such as SACEP. Our focus should be on networking, gaining knowledge from such networking, and then sharing our knowledge with others. Mr. LeRoy-Dyson suggested that the development of easy to read publications could be considered as one outcome of our efforts so that our knowledge would be shared broadly in the region. Mr. Oposa suggested that the next regional meeting of the group could be held on or about 18 April 2002 and the group suggested that Ms. Comino and Mr. Oposa should be the coordinators for the 18 April 2002 meeting, which might be held in Bali, Indonesia, and carry out other ad hoc tasks for the network.

4 CONCLUSION

The Asian and Pacific group, consisting of 19 representatives spanning the earth from Israel and Jordan to the Peoples Republic of China and Australia, agreed upon the recommendations to create a database of regional members, including biographical sketches; and commit to meet next year, perhaps on 18 April 2002, in order to:

- establish a regional group to assist each other in environmental implementation, compliance and enforcement;
- share case studies with a focus on lessons learned;
- focus on key environmental issues in the region;
- canvas INECE to support regional networks in Asia;

Other issues for consideration include:

- public information on Enforcement and Compliance mechanisms;
- voluntary compliance;

- effective governance;
- inclusion of green, blue and brown issues;
- inclusion in regional participation efforts of multi-stakeholders, including parliamentarians, judges, and Civil Society,
- contacting representatives of countries missing from this INECE meeting.

The discussion included a country-by-country analysis of environmental and networking problems at the local, national and regional levels. A short list of significant regional intergovernmental bodies and NGOs was prepared. The discussion of ways to improve networking included the need to establish a website, to prepare easy-to-read publications on enforcing national and local laws and on developing opportunities for more face-to-face contacts.