

3rd High Level Seminar on Environmentally Sustainable Cities

Under the framework of the
East Asia Summit Environment Ministers Meeting

CHAIR'S SUMMARY

The 3rd High Level Seminar on Environmentally Sustainable Cities (HLS ESC), organised by the Governments of Cambodia, Japan, Australia, and Thailand, and the ASEAN Working Group on Environmentally Sustainable Cities, was held in Siem Reap, Cambodia on 6 - 8 March 2012. The Seminar was chaired by Dr. Vann Monyneath (Deputy Director General for Technical Affairs, Ministry of the Environment, Cambodia) and co-chaired by Mr. Akira Nitta (Director, International Cooperation Office, Ministry of the Environment, Japan), Mr. Andrew McNee (Assistant Secretary, Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water Population and Communities, Australia) and Dr. Wijarn Simachaya (Director General, Pollution Control Department, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand).

The Seminar brought together about 230 participants consisting of representatives from 14 national governments, 39 local authorities and 27 international organisations for information exchange, knowledge sharing and frank discussion on the agenda of environmentally sustainable city development through Plenary and Thematic Sessions (Appendix A and B).

The Seminar recalled the main outputs of the 1st and 2nd HLS ESC and the progress made as follows:

- The 1st HLS ESC (2–4 March 2010, Jakarta, Indonesia) recommended the following activities as practical means for promoting ESC development in the region:

- i. An East Asian 'Model Cities' Initiative;
 - ii. A clearinghouse for ESC-related data and information;
 - iii. A Public and Private Sector Forum on ESC;
 - iv. ESC Capacity Building Programme;
 - v. EAS ESC Awards based on performance indicators.
- **The 2nd HLS ESC (5–6 March 2011, Kitakyushu, Japan)** welcomed the implementation of the proposed ASEAN ESC Model Cities Programme (Model Cities Programme), which was developed to follow up on the five recommended activities from the 1st HLS ESC. The programme was approved and commenced implementation a month later.

The Seminar adopted this Chairs' Summary as a record of the discussion and outcomes.

1) From the Plenary I (Outputs of the ASEAN ESC Model Cities Programme) (Appendix C), the Seminar noted the following:

- a) Progress has been made on realising the five activities recommended by the 1st HLS ESC as follows:

No.	Recommended practical activities of the 1 st HLS ESC	Progress made so far
1	An East Asian 'Model Cities' Initiative	The Model Cities Programme was developed and began implementation in April 2011.
2	A clearinghouse for ESC-related data and information	The prototype of the 'Sustainable Cities Asia Knowledge Hub' was developed under the Model Cities Programme.
3	A Public and Private Sector Forum on ESC	Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) was discussed in a Thematic Session of the 3 rd HLS ESC.
4	ESC Capacity Building Programme	8 national governments and 14 cities received assistance for capacity building and technical support for ESC sectors through the ASEAN ESC Model Cities Programme.

		Australia is hosting two EAS seminars in 2012 on "Urban Sustainability – Adapting to Change".
5	EAS ESC Awards based on performance indicators	Linkages were established between the Model Cities Programme and existing regional (ASEAN ESC Award) and national award schemes.

- b) The Model Cities Programme has been synergised with existing national ESC frameworks in respective countries. For example, it helped to initiate and develop national ESC initiatives in Cambodia (a new nationwide ESC campaign and contest) and Viet Nam (formulation of new national ESC criteria and indicators suited to Viet Nam's priorities).
- c) Selected cities (Phnom Penh, Siem Reap, Palembang, Surabaya, Xamneua, Kuching North, Yangon, Maehongson, Muangklang, Phitsanulok, Palo, Puerto Princesa, Danang and Cao Lanh) of Year 1 of the Model Cities Programme have achieved visible progress in their proposed activities and are highly interested to sustain the programme into Year 2 synergising with complementary national initiatives, with the participation of additional cities and a broadened scope of activities.
- d) Assistance to cities should be demand-driven and may be more effective if pursued with structured and strategic approaches that match demand to supply.
- e) A proposal for extending the Model Cities Programme into Year 2 with an enhanced modality and expanded scope based on lessons learnt from Year 1 is under consideration within the ASEAN process. The other EAS participating countries (Australia, China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, United States and Russia) as well as supporting organisations have been encouraged to collaborate in and provide support to the proposed extension of the Model Cities Programme.

2) Participants also identified the following key messages relevant to future activities of the Model Cities Programme from the presentations and discussion in the Opening Session, Thematic Sessions 1 and 2 (Appendix D, E):

- a) The key factors for efficient water supply management are: commitment to good governance and

best performance, investment in staff capacity development, independent and accountable management and appropriate tariffs to cover the costs for providing the water supply service.

- b) Cities play a crucial role in building a low-carbon future by providing a comprehensive system to demonstrate innovative, effective and replicable approaches, and cities should avoid being 'locked' into unsustainable development pathways by embracing science-based 'leapfrog' approaches and drawing on Asian wisdom and traditional values.
- c) National governments play a critical role by creating an enabling environment for local initiatives, including through provision of appropriate policies, legal frameworks and guidelines, as well as identifying, scaling up and replicating good practices and policies in the local context. Indicators are important for setting the objective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to measure actual progress made by cities.
- d) Solid waste management (focusing on composting, biogas, waste-to-energy and the 3Rs), water supply, low-cost wastewater management, land-use planning and urban greenery management are key priority sectors for capacity building.
- e) Concepts such as low-carbon city, green growth and climate resilient development are crucial for providing a holistic cross-sectoral framework in urban planning. Sustained political commitment for short-, mid- and long-term policies supported by strategic master planning is essential.
- f) City-to-city cooperation, such as twinning partnerships, is a feasible modality for capacity development, but requires a structured and strategic approach to be effective.
- g) Easy-to-use modelling techniques may be useful in helping cities come up with appropriate and cost-effective ESC practices and policies.
- h) Adapting to climate changes, including disaster risk reduction, is an increasingly pertinent issue for Asian cities, particularly those in coastal and low-lying areas. Adaptation should be mainstreamed into overall development planning and implementation.
- i) The private sector may contribute to ESC development as a source of expertise and efficiency, particularly for enhancing urban infrastructure. Effective PPP arrangements should be service-driven, allow flexibility and have shared ownership with clear delineation of responsibilities.

3) In Plenary Session 2 (Way Forward for ESC Development in the EAS Region)(Appendix F), the Seminar:

- a) **Noted and appreciated** the ideas and proposals of Australia, Republic of Korea, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD), Centre for Liveable Cities, Singapore (CLC), German International Cooperation (GIZ), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Cities Development Initiative for Asia (CDIA), Asian Institute for Technology (AIT), CITYNET (The Regional Network of Local Authorities for the Management of Human Settlements) and Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) for furthering ESC development and expansion in the region and recommended all stakeholders to explore possible synergies among each other for greater impacts and to minimise duplication of effort and resources.

4) The Seminar therefore:

- a) **Suggested** that the HLS ESC – with its main aim of providing a broad and inclusive platform for all relevant stakeholders to exchange information, facilitate collaboration among diverse stakeholders be continued in the future on a regular basis, either streamlined with the Model Cities Programme (if extended), through its regional seminars and its city-focused framework, or as a separate initiative supported by the various participating stakeholders;
- b) **Recommended** that the EAS Environment Ministers encourage full collaboration with, and provide support to, the future implementation of the Model Cities Programme and consider the role of the EAS HLS ESC in the future;
- c) **Encouraged** EAS Environment Ministers, governments and other stakeholders to organise future activities to promote ESC development, in particular those promoting: i) national governments' role to provide an enabling environment for effective implementation; ii) city-to-city to cooperation; iii) urban planning and development concepts such as low carbon cities, green growth and climate resilient development; and iv) replication and scale-up of good practices and policies;
- d) **Acknowledged that cities are the driving force for growth and development of the region and recommended** that EAS Environment Ministers re-affirm ESC as a priority area for regional

collaboration, building on the existing ASEAN framework, in particular utilising the established networks of the Model Cities Programme, as well as other relevant regional mechanisms and networks, focusing on intensifying city-to-city cooperation and broadening engagement to collaborate with other stakeholders beyond the EAS EMM framework;

e) **Requested** the Secretariat (IGES and/or ASEAN Secretariat as appropriate) to report the Chair's Summary of the 3rd HLS ESC and consult relevant stakeholders on possible ways forward at the following upcoming meetings:

- 11th Meeting of the ASEAN Working Group on ESC to be held tentatively in July 2012 in Manila, Philippines;
- 23rd ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on the Environment and the Officials Meeting for the 3rd EAS Environment Ministers Meeting which are planned to be held in August 2012 in Cambodia;
- 3rd EAS Environment Ministers Meeting to be held tentatively in September 2012 in Thailand;
- Other relevant major meetings and seminars pertaining to ESC.

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Concept Note and Programme

Appendix B – List of Participants

Appendix C – Summary of Plenary Session 1

Appendix D – Summary of Thematic Sessions 1A, 1B and 1C

Appendix E – Summary of Thematic Sessions 2A, 2B and 2C

Appendix F – Summary of Plenary Session 2

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