

Chair's Summary

Overview

1. The Meeting of the Joint Forum of the Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership (APCAP) was held on 26-27 November 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand (see **Annex 1** for Agenda). The meeting was organized by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The meeting was attended by 23 countries in Asia and the Pacific, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and experts.
2. H. E Amy Khor, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Environment and Water Resources, Singapore chaired the Meeting of the Joint Forum of the Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership (APCAP). H. E. Ali Amir, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Maldives and H. E. Abdullah Al Islam Jakob, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment and Forests served as the Vice Chairs.
3. The APCAP Joint Forum meeting covered the following issues:
 - Review and discussions of the latest policy relevant scientific developments related to air pollution and control measures;
 - Review and comments on the Assessment report on air pollution including Short Lived Climate Pollutants (SLCPs) in Asia Pacific;
 - Review and comments on country and regional progress on implementation of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) resolution on air quality and synergetic implementation of the air quality related resolution by the UNEA and other air quality related activities in Asia Pacific;
 - Review and presentation of the governance and working modalities of the APCAP.

Session 1: Opening and Introduction

4. The APCAP Joint Forum meeting was officially opened by H.E. General Surasak Kanchanarat, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Thailand. He outlined the various initiatives of the Thai government to address air pollution on a national and regional level and stressed the importance of forging partnerships and cooperation not only with the ASEAN region but with other countries to tackle air pollution, such as the issue of transboundary haze pollution. He was glad to note that the recent haze experienced by the region has seen elevated cooperation at the bilateral and multilateral level to prevent and suppress the open fires.
5. The keynote address was delivered by H. E. Dr Amy Khor, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources, Singapore. She emphasized the need for countries to take concrete action against air pollution and to implement resolution. She cited Singapore's pragmatic approach to pursuing long-standing resolutions to achieve sustainable development. She commended the closer regional and international cooperation to address common environmental challenges, such as the transboundary haze pollution, which cannot be addressed unilaterally. She highlighted that while the haze is a multi-faceted problem, the root cause of the haze-causing fires was due to unsustainable land clearing practices, which impacted economies, health and way of life negatively in the region. In conclusion, she stressed that there is an urgent need for companies to undertake responsible and sustainable business practices.

6. Kaveh Zahedi, Regional Director and Representative for Asia and the Pacific, UNEP provided the introduction to the meeting. He explained that the APCAP Joint Forum was set up as a response to the call by countries for immediate and coordinated action to deal with air pollution and its impacts, including from the first United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) of UNEP in 2014 and the First Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific in May 2015. The first Joint Forum of APCAP is also an outcome of the successful consultation meeting with countries and institutions working on air pollution issues in Asia Pacific in November 2014.
7. He discussed that the overarching goal of APCAP is to promote better air quality management in Asia Pacific and thereby reduce air pollution and mortality, improve agricultural productivity and contribute to other co-benefits such as conservation of biodiversity and local and global climate change. The specific objectives of APCAP are to:
 - Promote coordination and cohesion among air pollution initiatives in Asia Pacific;
 - Promote science-policy dialogue based on the latest scientific knowledge and implementation experience, including through assessments and studies commissioned through APCAP; and
 - Promote and support national efforts to improve air quality through capacity building, institutional building, technical assistance and south-south, north-south and triangular cooperation.

Session 2: Latest Scientific Developments

8. This session aimed at informing the participants of the latest scientific developments related to air pollution.
9. Markus Amann, International Institute for Applied Systems (IIASA), provided an overview of the latest scientific developments on the understanding of air pollution. He highlighted findings from the Global Burden of Diseases study in 2013 identifying air pollution as one of the leading global health risks, especially for Asia. He described how recent developments in atmospheric science especially in Asia are directed towards broadening understanding of emission sources and cost-effective control measures. Understanding interactions between air quality, meteorology and climate also influence prioritizing policies that may offer win-win solutions that cut into economic losses and lost lives brought about by deteriorating air quality. He emphasized the need to take a multi-pollutant and multi-sectoral approach for addressing air pollution.
10. Some countries commented that scientific work is important as it served as a beacon to facilitate policy makers in making the best decisions. There was still a gap in the science, particularly to understand the impacts of haze and to convey important messages, for example the contribution of agricultural emissions to city air pollution, to policy makers. There was a need for comprehensive oversight on scientific studies in understanding the impact of haze on health and economy, especially since the sporadic and sudden spikes in exposure to pollutants during haze episodes differed from long term chronic exposure.

Session 3: Report from other existing regional initiatives on air pollution

11. There are several regional and sub-regional initiatives and networks working on atmospheric issues in Asia Pacific. In order to promote greater synergies between these initiatives and networks, in this session, representatives from these initiatives and networks reported to the

Joint Forum the outcomes of their respective meetings that took place during the course of the Clean Air Week.

12. Presentations were made by the APCAP Science Panel [Kim Oanh, AIT], Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia (EANET) [Wijarn Simachaya, Pollution Control Department of Thailand], Malé Declaration on Control and Prevention of Air pollution and its Likely Transboundary Effects for South Asia [J.S. Kamyotra, Central Pollution Control Board of India], Air Quality Thematic Working Group of Regional Forum on Environment and Health in South and East Asian countries [Wijarn Simachaya, Pollution Control Department of Thailand], and Atmospheric Brown Cloud (ABC) Science Team [Teruyuki Nakajima, Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency].

Session 4: Organisational Structure of the APCAP

13. In this session, UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific presented the draft Framework for the APCAP including the objectives, functions, participation, organization and financing for discussion.
14. Countries welcomed the APCAP Joint Forum as a necessary platform to promote coordinated action on a priority issue for Asia Pacific. While recognizing the need for a coordinated approach, some countries raised concern regarding the draft framework of APCAP specifically the organization and functions. They noted that more time could have been allowed to review the documents and requested a more formal process by UNEP to engage country partners going forward.
15. As a response, UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific agreed to consult with countries on their involvement in APCAP and to work closely with partners on the future development of the APCAP.

Session 5: Air Pollution Regional Assessment Report

16. During this session, the annotated outline of the Air Pollution Regional Assessment Report was presented to the Joint Forum Meeting by the Co-chair of the Regional Assessment. The session gathered inputs, comments, and recommendation from the Forum in order to move forward in drafting the report.
17. Some countries raised concern on the need for new scientific research on air pollution and the relevance of the regional assessment, emphasizing that a considerable number of assessments are already available. It was suggested that the scope of the regional assessment should integrate the latest existing scientific data, assess not well known challenges but opportunities for action, and focus on identifying policy measures with greatest economic and social benefits. Linkages to ongoing assessments such as the Global Environment Outlook should also be made.
18. The UNEP Regional Office for Asia Pacific provided clarification on the UNEA Resolution on Strengthening the role of UNEP in promoting air quality which requested the UNEP Executive Director, inter alia, to “undertake global, regional and subregional, as appropriate, assessments by 2016, if possible, focused on identifying gaps in capacity to address air quality issues, including monitoring and control, opportunities for cooperation, and air pollution mitigation opportunities...”. The UNEP Regional Office for Asia Pacific concurred with suggestions that the report should pull together existing fragmented science into a science-

policy report and confirmed that consultations with countries would be built into the timeline for producing the regional assessment report as part of the report's peer review process.

19. The Co-chair of the Regional Assessment underlined that comments and suggestions made at the meeting will be taken into consideration while developing the regional assessment report. Interested countries can recommend scientists to be part of the assessment. The draft report will be sent to all the APCAP Partners for the review and comments when available.

Session 6: Panel Discussion on Good Practices

20. The session comprised of presentations on good practices for the control and prevention of air pollution followed by a discussion with the aim of promoting South-South Cooperation as well as upscaling the feasible good practices.
21. Tatsuya Yanase, Ministry of Environment, Japan presented on the air pollution control policy in Japan and what the key considerations are in establishing their policies, focusing on Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) emission control as an example.
22. Thalearnsak Petchsuwan, Pollution Control Department, Thailand presented on their "Zero Burning Village" project. He highlighted need for better community awareness is key to achieving a sustainable fire and haze pollution control.
23. Ibrahim Rehman, The Energy and Resources Institute, India presented on the indoor air pollution in India, its impact to women and children, and the need for its assessment.
24. Jieqing Zhang, Ministry of Environmental Protection, China presented on the concrete actions taken by the their government including stricter emission standards, compulsory phase out of yellow label vehicles, forecasting-warning, and monitoring of air quality in cities.
25. Herath Gunatilake, Asian Development Bank presented on ADB's energy policy and how it supports air quality improvement.

Session 7: United Nations Environment Assembly Resolution and World Health Assembly Resolution

26. The session provided an opportunity to discuss and share regional and country progress on the UNEA Resolution and World Health Assembly Resolution on air quality.
27. Fanny Demassieux, UNEP, and Liviu Vedrasco, WHO, presented air quality resolutions from their respective governing bodies.
28. Asia Pacific countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, PR China, India, Iran, Japan, Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam) presented the actions already taken, challenges, planned action in the next two years and areas for support needed in line with the UNEA resolution on air quality.
29. Measures on the use of cleaner fuels and technologies to reduce emissions are being implemented in various sectors such as energy, transport and industry. Air quality standards and monitoring capacity are being strengthened to move towards achieving WHO guideline values and interim targets to protect public health. Development and implementation of action

plans for air quality involve multi-sectoral collaboration. Mechanisms of sharing air quality information for various stakeholders are in place for most of the countries.

30. Several of the Asia Pacific countries have identified actions to be implemented in the next two years in line with the UNEA resolution. These include:

- Strengthen implementation of action plans on air quality
- Development of national and/or local policies on air quality management
- Review and strengthening of air quality and emission standards
- Invest on clean fuels and technologies
- Enhance participation in regional/international platforms for experience and knowledge sharing
- Strengthen bilateral/multilateral cooperation to address transboundary pollution

31. The main challenges faced and support needed by Asia Pacific countries identified during the session were:

- implementing air quality management strategies and better cooperation with the local government
- support to achieve national PM_{2.5} standards
- lack of knowledge in implementing air quality monitoring by some countries and the need for technical guidance, capacity building, and access to technology
- accessibility of data and the need for better awareness of the health impact of air pollution

32. Existing regional and global level initiatives (Asian Co-benefit Partnership, International Center for Integrated Mountain Development, Convention on Long-range transboundary Air Pollution, Climate and Clean Air Coalition, and Institute for Advanced Studies) also presented their plans to support countries in achieving the goals of the UNEA resolution on air quality.

33. The following were highlighted for action:

- promote regional cooperation in addressing air pollution in the wider context of sustainable development
- enhance communication and information sharing among relevant stakeholders
- establish and implement nationally determined AQ and emission standards
- improve AQ monitoring network and data transmission system

34. The session demonstrated that there are already several relevant actions in line with the UNEA resolution being implemented by the different countries in Asia Pacific. However, still a lot of work has to be done to fully achieve the health and other sustainable development benefits. The region also has wealth of knowledge in the form of regional networks and initiatives. This expertise can be utilized for developing and or implementing national action plans through capacity building. UNEP concluded that it would review the capacity building and technical support needs and facilitate north-south, south-south and triangular cooperation to help address these expressed needs.

Session 8: Guidance Framework for Better Air Quality in Asian Cities

35. In this session, Clean Air Asia presented and shared the Guidance Framework for Better Air Quality on Asian Cities which has been developed by Clean Air Asia as an outcome from the Governmental Meetings on Urban Air Quality in Asian Cities co-organized by UNEP ROAP and Clean Air Asia to harmonize approaches for urban air quality in the region.

36. The Guidance Framework is a voluntary, non-binding document which aims to provide a recognized guidance to implement the Long-Term Vision for Urban Air Quality in Asia. It covers six guidance areas of air quality management based on feedback from previous Governmental Meetings on the priority areas and needs to be considered in the development of the Guidance Framework. The Guidance Framework was welcomed and requests were made to focus on supporting countries and cities with its effective implementation. CAA offered countries and cities support in implementing the Guidance Framework.

Session 9: Summary and Closing of the Meeting

37. The first Meeting of the Joint Forum of APCAP provided an opportunity to enhance synergies among various existing air pollution initiatives in the region, and promoted science-policy dialogue, especially in support of the UNEA and WHA resolutions on air quality.
38. Asia Pacific countries, regional initiatives and networks, and other organizations welcomed the first Meeting of the Joint Forum of APCAP and thanked the Government of Thailand for their hospitality.
39. Vice Chair, H. E. Ali Amir, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment and Energy, Maldives closed the Meeting.