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Subregional Office for East and North-East Asia

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Dr. Kilaparti Ramakrishna

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Welcome to the second issue of Connections! There is so much UNESCAP SRO-ENEA news to share with you; it is a difficult task to limit it to just a few items. This is because we have been involved in nearly a dozen conferences and meetings throughout the sub-region, including our Commission's 68th session in Bangkok and discussions on strengthening regional economic integration, trade and energy connectivity and finding sustainable solutions to close development gaps among and within Asia-Pacific countries. In all these meetings, our goal is to broaden efforts to increase

sustainable growth and encourage greater multilateralism in East and Northeast Asia. In this issue of Connections, you will find reviews of our latest conferences, details about our upcoming events and much more.

Let me say just a few words here about our Commission Session on the theme of "Growing Together: Economic Integration for an Inclusive and Sustainable Asia-Pacific Century" in Bangkok. This was my first session and I was extremely impressed with the energy that the member countries brought to the issues discussed. The agreements reached are on some of the major issues of our time and will chart the course forward for Asia and the Pacific. The resolutions adopted on topics ranging from regional energy connectivity, regional cooperation for paperless trade, and implementing the Ministerial Declaration on Transport Development will not only open up opportunities for greater regional connectivity, but as our Executive Secretary, Dr. Noeleen Heyzer has said are true "game-changers."

In addition to the success of our Commission session, SRO-ENEA staff recently organized an eco-labeling workshop in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia titled, "Capacity Building Training for Mongolian Experts in Eco-labeling." The workshop focused on efforts to raise awareness among Mongolian officials on the process of labeling and promoting environmentally friendly products. Using insight and best practices from other SRO-ENEA members, the workshop helped share effective strategies and increase the potential for eco-labeling success in Mongolia.

In the upcoming months, UNESCAP SRO-ENEA will also be visiting other member countries. Missions to Japan, Russia and China are all scheduled in the upcoming weeks so keep reading for more details. In the next issue of Connections, I will have an opportunity to speak about ESCAP's participation in the Rio+20 Conference and the take away messages of particular relevance to our subregion. For the most up to date information, visit our website <http://northeast-sro.unescap.org> and be sure to stay connected.



Highlights

Growing Together: Economic Integration for an Inclusive and Sustainable Asia-Pacific Century

68th Session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

At the 68th annual session of UNESCAP, Asia-Pacific governments agreed to strengthen regional economic integration, trade and energy connectivity as keystones of a future of shared and sustainable regional growth. In the face of daunting socio-economic and environmental challenges, member countries articulated an agenda for inclusive and sustainable regional growth aiming to close development gaps among and within Asia-Pacific countries and setting economic progress on a greener path.

“The time has come to take our future into our own hands – to rebalance and reset our economies through stronger regional integration.”

- ESCAP Executive Secretary
Dr. Noeleen Heyzer

“Together we will now transform these resolutions into bold action and profound results to bring about the much-needed transformation to a more inclusive and sustainable Asia-Pacific prosperity,” United Nations Under-Secretary-General and ESCAP

Executive Secretary Dr. Noeleen Heyzer told the assembly of 49 countries. “The time has come to take our future into our own hands – to rebalance and reset our economies through stronger regional integration,” stated the ESCAP Chief in her closing remarks, “and move our societies towards more inclusive and sustainable development pathways so that there is shared prosperity, social equity, dignity for all our people and respect for our planet.”

“Growing together: Economic integration for an inclusive and sustainable Asia-Pacific century” was the theme of the session. The region now has to cope with a “new normal” of global economic uncertainty combined with high and volatile commodity prices with the spike in food prices in 2010 adding almost 20 million people to the number of poor in Asia and the Pacific.

“Our discussions reflect growing regional agreement on the need



to make our growth more inclusive, greener and more sustainable – closing development gaps and strengthening social protection systems as new drivers of Asia-Pacific growth,” Dr. Heyzer said.

“This is especially important as we approach the Rio+20 summit – which will be the best chance to forge global agreement on the generational change necessary to shift to more sustainable growth paths. Asia-Pacific perspectives, especially those from our Pacific Island Countries, will be crucial to advance the negotiations on the shape of the post-2015 development agenda.”

Staff from SRO-ENECA attended the session as part of the Secretariat. Representatives from our six member countries were briefed on some of our recent and upcoming programmes and expressed satisfaction with the progress made since SRO-ENECA opened in 2010.





Activities

Building Relationships, Finding Solutions

Successful mission to Mongolia

In April, UNESCAP SRO-ENEA Director, Kilaparti Ramakrishna and staff spent four days meeting with Mongolian high-level government officials, academics and international organizations to better understand the social and economic challenges facing the country. In nearly a dozen meetings, leaders from Foreign Affairs, Welfare and Labour and Environment Ministries communicated their policy priorities and motivations to SRO-ENEA staff, seeking advice and cooperation in finding solutions.

Mongolia is experiencing accelerated growth, with GDP projected to expand by 17% in 2012. Despite new opportunities, the country is also facing numerous economic and social hurdles, including a poverty rate of nearly 40%, water scarcity, high unemployment, poor access to health care for rural and poor communities, weak education and deficient infrastructure.

The successful mission to Mongolia allowed SRO-ENEA to



garner first-hand knowledge of Mongolia's struggles and solidify its cooperative relationship to respond to the country's needs.

Japan Mission: Decrease Carbon, Increase Cooperation

In April, UNESCAP SRO-ENEA Director, Kilaparti Ramakrishna traveled to Tokyo, Japan to join the East Asia Low Carbon Growth Partnership Dialogue organized by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. East Asia is the growth center of the world economy and greenhouse gas emissions. Low carbon growth models may be the solution to balancing economic development and environmental protection.

In order to facilitate the implementation of low carbon growth models throughout North East Asia, the Partnership Dialogue promoted the sharing of best practices and experiences. Low carbon advancements can be made through cooperation among stakeholders, including government, the private sector, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations.

While in Japan, SRO-ENEA staff also attended a bilateral meeting with the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to further discuss the progress of low carbon green growth. SRO-ENEA is committed to promoting sustainable environmental policies and was encouraged by Japanese commitment and progress.

Development: Incorporating Disaster Risk and Assessment

At a recent consultative meeting in Jeju, Republic of Korea (ROK), UNESCAP SRO-ENEA staff joined representatives from the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), government agencies and Korean universities to discuss the topic, 'Asia and Pacific Region's Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) into Development.'



The Asia Pacific region is the most disaster prone region in the world and seriously affected by a range of disasters. As a result, incorporation of DRR and CCA into development plans is especially critical for SRO-ENEA members. SRO-ENEA staff joined the collaborative meeting with the objective of developing recommendations for policymakers.

The participants developed a ten point scorecard assessing the degree to which DRR and CCA are integrated into national development planning. The scorecard will be a tool to encourage greater DRR and CCA planning and highlight areas for improvement. The findings from the meeting and the resulting scorecard will be presented to the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction to be held in October 2012 in Indonesia.



Activities

Global Green Growth Summit 2012

Global governance for green growth and the green economy

Joining global leaders, academic experts and policy makers, UNESCAP SRO-ENEA participated in the 2012 Global Green Growth Summit hosted by the Republic of Korea (ROK). The event brought together a diverse range of specialists to address issues impacting green growth, including topics of land use, governance, agriculture and technology. ROK President Lee Myung-bak provided remarks at the Summit noting that the pursuit of green growth is ongoing, "Our green growth quest is a collective destiny and a never-ending journey for us all. For as long as humans exist and live on this planet, the journey of green growth will continue onwards."

Leading the discussion on technology and innovation, SRO-ENEA Director Kilaparti Ramakrishna noted that the capacity of nations to effectively execute green growth strategies is central to the issue of green growth. Speaking on "International Architecture for Green Technology and Innovation", Director Ramakrishna highlighted the need to increase the rate of technological advancement and promote broader dissemination and implementation.

Enhancing Subregional Cooperation on Eco-Labeling

In conjunction with the Mongolian Ministry of Nature, Environment and Tourism (MONET) and Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MNCCI), UNESCAP SRO-ENEA recently organized an eco-labeling workshop in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The workshop, titled, "Capacity Building Training for Mongolian Experts in Eco-labeling" brought together eco-labeling agencies in North-East Asia, government agencies



and the Mongolian private sector.

Eco-labeling is the process of labeling products that meet specific environmental standards and is an important method for promoting and marketing environmentally friendly products. Through eco-labeling consumers can become active participants in protecting their environment.

The successful eco-labeling workshop raised awareness among Mongolian officials on the framework of eco-labeling in other North-East Asian countries, provided technical inputs to the current Mongolian programme and identified areas for future eco-labeling collaboration.

Pursuing Shared Prosperity

UNESCAP launches 2012 Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific

The 2012 Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific was launched on 10 May 2012 in 32 locations across the globe, including five of six SRO-ENEA member countries. In its flagship annual report, UNESCAP offers a comprehensive examination of short and medium-term challenges and solutions for the Asia-Pacific region. Secretary-General of the United Nations BAN Ki-moon explained, "This Survey proposes a number of policies that would contribute to such a

survey titled 'Pursuing Shared Prosperity in an Era of Turbulence and High Commodity Prices' evaluates a range of regional concerns, breaking down the specific challenges facing each of the Asian subregions.

The SRO-ENEA office launched the survey at the two-day Global Green Growth Summit in Seoul, Republic of Korea. Columbia University economist Jeffrey Sachs offered insight into the economic growth and outlook of the North-East Asia subregion. He explained, "The quality of growth in Asian economies is not what it should be to deliver the maximum benefits of well-being, either in the short term or the long run." Sachs noted concerns over the slow down of growth in the global economy, including in fast growing economies such as China and the effect of high commodity prices on GDP growth and poverty reduction.

The full report is available on the UNESCAP website at www.unescap.org/pdd/publications/survey2012.



rebalancing, and that would benefit poor people in particular, of whom nearly 900 million live in the Asia-Pacific region."

The 2012



Events

June 2012 → Yeosu Expo Opens: UNESCAP Shines With Oceans and Coasts Exhibit

In honor of the 2012 Yeosu Expo, UNESCAP joined United Nations agencies from around the world to offer unique interpretations of the Expo theme, "The Living Ocean and Coast." From **10-23 June 2012** UNESCAP is offering its interpretation through an interactive exhibit titled, "Oceans and Coasts: Connecting Our Lives, Ensuring Our Future – The Choice is Yours."

The Asia Pacific region is closely connected to ocean and coastal ecosystems. According to recent data from the University of British Columbia, SRO-ENEA member states, China, Japan, Republic of Korea and Russian Federation are among the top ten global fish consumers. Additional data indicates that a majority of the world's population relies on fish or fishery products to provide at least 15% of their animal protein intake.

Ocean and coastal habitats remain threatened as a result of unsustainable development and environmen-



tally degrading public policy. UNESCAP continues to lead the way in promoting green economies in Asia and the Pacific to promote economic development and environmental sustainability.

June 2012 → Crossing The Line: Transboundary Marine Pollution



North-East Asian oceans face the world's highest level of coastal population as well as pollution intensity. Competition over marine resources easily becomes a key source of conflicts between countries.

Responding to marine pollution problems requires in-depth cooperation among regional members and a joint commitment to repairing and preserving marine ecosystems. In this regard, the NEASPEC Experts Consultation Meeting on "Environmental challenges related to transboundary marine pollution", which will be held from **27-28 June 2012** in Seoul, provides an opportunity for experts from member States and international organizations to review existing subregional and multilateral initiatives for marine environmental cooperation and identify potential new areas of cooperation.

July 2012 → Golden Years: Building Sustainable Ageing Communities

In 2010, one in ten people in the North-East Asia subregion were 65 or older. By 2050 that proportion is expected to rise to one in three. This rapid, unprecedented demographic shift will significantly impact the economic and societal decisions of countries throughout the subregion. Older citizens play vital economic, social and moral roles in communities, but also pose unique challenges for government health and income support programmes. In order to respond to these benefits and challenges, governments must fully understand the changing needs of ageing communities and create policies to leverage their unique and valuable contributions.

In anticipation of these changes, UNESCAP SRO-ENEA will organize the Asian Symposium on Building Sustainable Ageing Societies on **5-6 July 2012** together with the National Population and Family Planning Commission of China in Changchun, Jilin Province, China. Against the background of the regional and global review and appraisal of the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, government officials, academic experts and representatives from civil society will gather to discuss government strategies, share good practices, and promote mutual learning.



Events

July 2012 → Inspecting Mongolia's Inspections

Expert group meeting to modernize Mongolian inspections and quarantine process

As the only landlocked country in East and Northeast Asia, Mongolia faces unique cross-border trade challenges. The World Bank reports in terms of 'ease of trading across borders' Mongolia is struggling, falling in world rankings from 155th in 2009 to 159th in 2011. To respond to this problem, UNESCAP SRO-ENEA will host an Expert Group Meeting on **4-5 July 2012** in Ulaan Baatar to assess the inspection and quarantine process of Mongolia's General Agency for Specialized Inspection (GASI).

SRO-ENEA Senior Economic Affairs Officer, Andrea Goldstein will join experts from North-East Asia's quarantine and inspection agencies to identify good practices, procedures and processes from the sub-region and their applicability to Mongolia. Previous research in Mongolia has noted that GASI lacks the capacity, administrative procedures, equipment and facilities to adequately respond to the import/export inspection and quarantine needs of the country.

Improving the functioning of GASI will raise efficiency within government, but also have broader implications for Mongolian consumers and companies. Through more convenient and accessible trade, Mongolians will have greater access to quality products, services and additional pathways to prosperity.



July 2012 → Crossing Over: Transboundary Air Pollution

Smoke haze from forest fires, power plants, transportation, biomass burning and numerous other sources contributes to air pollution that crosses borders and spreads across the North-East Asia region. In response to this challenge, [North-East Asian Subregional Programme for Environmental Cooperation \(NEASPEC\)](#), and the Scientific Research Institute (SRI) "Atmosphere" of the Russian Federation are organizing an, "Expert Consultation Meeting on Transboundary Air Pollution in North-East Asia" from **9-10 July 2012** in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation.

The meeting is intended to review existing subregional and regional mechanisms, identify existing gaps, and formulate options for multilateral cooperation on transboundary air pollution in North-East Asia.

July 2012 → Nature Conservation in Transboundary Areas

Natural habitats and ecosystems are rarely controlled by man made boundaries. Adjacent seas, animal migration patterns, and integrated land borders result in cross-border regional environments. Environmental changes and pollution in one country often impact surrounding states. UNESCAP SRO-ENEA will join the 6th International Ecological Forum on Nature without Borders and organize the NEASPEC Workshop on Nature Conservation.

The 6th International Ecological Forum will be held on **19-20 July 2012** in Vladivostok, Russian Federation to bring together public authorities, government bodies, local municipalities, international organizations and academic experts. The forum will cover a range of topics, including cross border ecological challenges and threats and trans-border conservation of biodiversity.

The NEASPEC workshop includes two days of field training which will also be held in Vladivostok, Russian Federation from **21-23 July 2012**. This workshop is part of an on-going nature conservation project, focusing on the protection of Amur tiger and leopard. The workshop will review policies and programmes for protecting flagship species, and discuss the framework of multi and bilateral cooperation for nature conservation in the Tumen River area.



Experts Share Knowledge with SRO-ENEA Staff

SRO-ENEA constantly seeks the latest research and expertise from industry leaders, academics and government officials. In May and June, two experts visited the SRO-ENEA office to share their expertise.

**Dr. C.J. Nelson of the University of Missouri
Curator's Professor Emeritus and Senior Advisor on Asian Affairs**

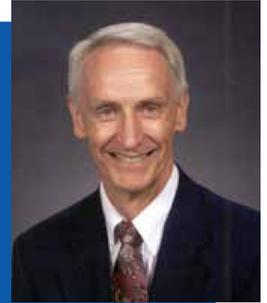
Combining his agricultural research and deep knowledge of international affairs, Dr. Nelson is an expert in humanitarian aid through economic development. From numerous visits to the Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK), Dr. Nelson has gained insight into crop production and soil quality challenges in DPRK. During his visit to the SRO-ENEA office, Dr. Nelson shared his findings and explained that agricultural development is the key to increased prosperity and health for the people of DPRK.

**Dr. Barbara Stallings of Brown University
Watson Institute for International Studies - William R. Rhodes Research Scholar**

Dr. Stallings has conducted extensive research on economic reform and development in Latin America and



Dr. Barbara Stallings



Dr. C. Jerry Nelson

East Asia. Her most recent research compares patterns of official development assistance (OPA) from Asian donors and Western donors to East Asian recipients. Dr. Stallings shared her findings with SRO-ENEA staff, explaining that Asian donors are motivated to replicate their own growth and development experiences in lesser developed Asian countries and Western donors are more motivated to reduce poverty by giving to the poorest nations.

Together Again: SRO-ENEA Brings Together Heads of UN Agencies

UNESCAP SRO-ENEA brought together the heads of seven United Nations offices in the Republic of Korea (ROK) to reinforce cooperation and improve outreach.

The various UN agencies share similar objectives and goals, including the desire to increase communication with ROK's institutions. During the cooperative meeting, SRO-ENEA took the lead in suggesting the development of a shared United Nations ROK website to further share the progress and work of United Nations agencies in ROK. Other UN agencies suggested additional joint outreach measures including workshops and brochures.

As a result of the success of the meeting, heads of United Nations ROK agencies are looking forward to future efforts for cooperation and are already considering dates for additional meetings.

SRO-ENEA Welcomes New Staff

Andrea Goldstein: Senior Economic Affairs Officer

UNESCAP SRO-ENEA is pleased to welcome Andrea Goldstein as the new Senior Economic Affairs Officer. Mr. Goldstein comes with vast expertise and experience from his time at the OECD, including as Deputy Director of the G8-G5 Heiligendamm L'Aquila Dialogue Process Support Unit and Head of Global Relations in the Investment Division. He also worked for the World Bank Group, the Inter American Development Bank and the UK Department for International Development.

Mr. Goldstein is widely published on development issues, including the emergence of the BRICs and South-South economic and business cooperation. His books include *BRIC: Brasile, Russia, India e China alal guida dell'economia mondiale* (il Mulino 2011) and *Multinational Companies from Emerging Economies -*

Composition, Conceptualization and Direction in the Global Economy (Palgrave 2007, paperback edition 2009). He has also published 35 articles in refereed journals, including the Asian Development Review, BNL Quarterly Review and Cambridge Journal of Economics.

With this vast expertise, Mr. Goldstein will promote policy dialogue, undertake outreach activities, and provide analysis-based policy recommendations in the SRO-ENEA economies.

