

# Second Meeting of the Regional 3R Forum in Asia

*Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia  
4-6 October 2010*

**Theme: “3Rs for Green Economy and Sound Material-Cycle Society”**

## **Concept Note**

### **1. Background**

Most cities throughout Asia-Pacific region are facing severe challenges to cope with overflowing landfills and rapidly increasing volumes of municipal and industrial waste. The quantity of wastes is increasing significantly both in terms of gross amount and per-capita basis, and the types of waste are also diversifying, with the addition of hazardous and e-wastes. It is expected that about 1.56 billion people live in the region’s urban areas and is further projected to grow to 2.21 billion by 2020. The rapid urbanization has resulted in inadequate urban services such as – water supply, sanitation, waste water treatment, sewerage system, drainage and solid waste management. Also as industrial economies continue to grow in Asia, the region will generate more toxic chemicals and hazardous waste. At the same time, waste is widely assumed to be unavoidable which has led to economic and management practices that tend to promote generation of more waste. The region therefore needs to address an alternative method of growth that would favor policies towards sustainable use of resources, thereby preventing unsustainable increases in waste.

The above mentioned phenomenon of increasing volume and diversification of wastes is closely linked to the global spread of unsustainable consumption and production patterns. There is an expressed need to change this trend, to decouple this development path from environmental degradation. Such an effort would benefit the Asian countries not only by lessening the pressure on the natural environment and the risks to human health, but also by improving energy security, preserving natural capital, improving economic competitiveness, etc. Decoupling economic growth from resource use and environmental degradation is one of the key features of a green economy – a shared concept that is gaining high international recognition. Greening the economy refers to the process of reconfiguring businesses and infrastructure to deliver better returns on natural, human and economic capital investments, while at the same time reducing greenhouse gas emissions, extracting and using less natural resources, creating less waste and reducing social disparities (<http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/>).

The 3Rs, which refer to restraining generation (Reduce), promoting reuse (Re-use) and recycling (Recycle) of wastes, represent the concept of balancing environmental conservation and economic growth through the effective use of resources, is very much in line with the concept of “sustainable production and consumption (SPC),” highlighted in Chapter 4 of Agenda 21 “Changing Consumption Patterns”, and reiterated in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) adopted in the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in 2002. The 3Rs is an effective tool to improve resource efficiency, by encouraging the use of smaller amount of virgin materials (and through promoting the use of recycled materials) and generating less waste to produce the same product or services. The 3Rs also goes hand in hand with the Green Economy concept, as both opt for

extracting/using less resources and creating less waste. The 3R concept was endorsed by the G8 leaders in 2004, when Japan proposed the “3R Initiative” at the G8 Sea Island Summit. The 3R has gained wide support and its significance has been reconfirmed at various international conferences and meetings, such as the Ministerial Conference on the 3R Initiative held in Tokyo in April 2005, the Senior Officials Meetings held in March 2006 (in Tokyo) and in October 2007 (in Tokyo), and at the G8 Environment Ministers Meeting held in Kobe, Japan in May 2008.

With the objective of disseminating and sharing among Asian countries the best practices, tools, and technologies on various aspects of the 3Rs, as well as to facilitating a regional mechanism vis-à-vis high-level policy dialogue to address the 3Rs, waste management, and inter-related sustainability issues on a regular basis, UNCRD and the Ministry of the Environment-Japan (MoE-Japan) organized the Inaugural Meeting of the Regional 3R Forum in Asia on 11-12 November 2009. Challenges and opportunities concerning different waste streams were presented by eminent experts, followed by policy discussions among high-level government representatives. As an outcome of the Inaugural Meeting, the *Tokyo 3R Statement* was endorsed by the participants, through which the Regional 3R Forum in Asia was formally established. The overall direction and long and short term priorities for the Asian countries were also given in the Statement.

At the global level, the issue of waste management, among others, has been considered by the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in 2010 and 2011 ([http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd\\_csd18.shtml](http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_csd18.shtml)). The Inaugural Meeting of the Regional 3R Forum in Asia was recognized at the intersessional event of the CSD, and as such, the outcome of the Meeting was presented at the recently conducted 18th Session of CSD (CSD-18), 3-14 May 2010. The Chairs Summary of the CSD-18 noted that “Regional initiatives promoting 3Rs, such as the 3R Forum in Asia, should be enhanced.” Further, key messages and recommendations emerged from the CSD-18 such as:

- A zero waste economy, recognizing waste as a resource and waste prevention and minimization should be considered as valuable concepts to guide action on waste;
- Waste management needs to be addressed through integrated approaches;
- Reducing waste production, recycling waste and reusing materials should form the basis for sustainable waste management, and further, implementation of extended producer responsibility (EPR) should be considered;
- Emerging new waste streams such as electronic waste, plastics in the marine environment, oil and lubricants require special international and national action aiming at a high rate of recovery worldwide, and these streams need to be addressed through appropriate programmes and environmentally sound technologies to promote material and energy recovery;
- There is a need to build local capacity in the developing countries to address the flow of e-wastes, in particular, the shipment of e-waste to developing countries as second-hand and near-end-of-life

*3Rs offer an environmentally friendly alternatives to deal with growing generation of wastes and its related impact on human health, economy and natural ecosystem.*

*3Rs offer a complementary and integrated package of measures and tools to harness resources, energy, and economic benefits from waste.*

*3Rs offer a unique opportunity to local and national authorities for creating a new paradigm for the creation of a more human urban environment by effectively promoting resource efficiency and waste prevention as the top priority within the overall policy, planning and development.*

*3Rs provide opportunities for source reduction (increased resource efficiency/minimize raw material input), waste prevention/minimization of environmental risks through eco-friendly designs and products, and structured or reorganized production processes so that the waste of one industry becomes a valued input to another (industrial symbiosis).*

goods needs to be urgently addressed - in this regard, electronic companies take full responsibility for the safe recycling of their products.

In recognition of the above mentioned recommendations from the CSD-18, and building on the outcomes of the Inaugural Meeting, the **Second Meeting of the Regional 3R Forum** with the theme “3Rs for Green Economy and Sound Material-Cycle Society” would seek to highlight the 3Rs as an effective measure towards achieving two equally important goals, i.e., *green economy* and *sound material-cycle society*. In this context, the Second Meeting of the Regional 3R Forum is expected to address issues such as the co-benefits that could be achieved through the 3Rs, partnerships for strengthening efforts towards green economy and sound material-cycle society, the specific roles of SMEs and informal sector play in the 3Rs vis-à-vis promoting green economy and resource efficiency.

The Second Meeting of the Regional 3R Forum is expected to enhance regional input to CSD-19, which will discuss and address various policy options on waste management for sustainable development. The principal output of the Second Meeting of the Regional 3R Forum will be the Chair’s Summary, which will be put forward as a contribution to the CSD-19. It is also expected that the Second Meeting of the Regional 3R Forum would provide a regional input to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) RIO+20 in 2012, which will focus on “Green Economy in the context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication” as one of the possible themes.

## **2. Objectives**

The Second Meeting of the Regional 3R Forum in Asia will have the following objectives:

- contribute towards improved understanding and strengthened regional consensus in terms of policy options that promote the 3Rs towards achieving green economy, resource efficiency and sound material-cycle society;
- identify and share information on opportunities for collaborative actions and partnerships, including international financial mechanisms, public-private partnerships, etc., to expand waste management services;
- illustrate innovative initiatives, achievements and good practices in 3R programmes and strategies at local and national levels;
- enhance regional input to CSD-19 and UNCSD/Rio+20, in terms of various policy options and recommendations, as consolidated regional views, in response to major findings and outcomes of the CSD-18 in waste management sector.

## **3. Expected Outcomes**

The Second Meeting of the Regional 3R Forum in Asia will have the following outcomes:

- enhanced awareness and understanding among the participating countries about the significance of the 3Rs as tools/measures towards achieving green economy, resource efficiency and sound material-cycle society;
- identified and shared opportunities for collaborative actions and partnerships for expanding waste management services;
- Sharing of innovative approaches and best practices in 3R programmes and strategies at local and national level among participating countries, with accompanying documentation; and
- enhanced regional input to CSD-19 and UNCSD/Rio+20.

#### 4. Co-Organizers

The Second Meeting of the Regional 3R Forum will be co-organized by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHLG) of Malaysia, MoE-Japan, and the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD), with supports from various international organizations and donor agencies.

#### 5. Participants

Participation in the Forum is by invitation only. It is expected that around 70 senior government representatives from Asian countries, international experts and resource persons, and others as listed below will attend the Forum:

- High level government representatives and policy makers from Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Urban Development, Ministry of Local Government, and/or other relevant ministries in the context of waste management/3Rs.
- Subsidiary Expert Group (SEG) members and international resource persons in the field of 3Rs, integrated waste/resource management, and green economy.
- Experts and representatives of relevant UN and international organizations, including international financial institutions and donor agencies.
- Selected representatives of the private sector and NGOs.

The countries to be invited include Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam, Timor-Leste, and 3-4 Small Island Development States (SIDS).

In addition to the above listed participants, there will be up to 150 local participants who will be invited by MHLG-Malaysia, including government officials from central and local governments, private sector, academic research institutes and NGOs of Malaysia.

Participation in the UN Forum is free of charge. A limited number of travel supports will be available for nominated government representatives from the developing countries and invited experts/international resource persons. Unless otherwise indicated in the official invitation, it is the responsibility of participants to cover their own travel and accommodation costs.

#### 6. Contacts for Further Information

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