

CSD 19 Side Event – launching of the International Partnership for expanding waste management services to Local Authorities (IPLA)

Statement by Prof Sudip K. Rakshit, Vice President Research,

Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)

(Representatives of the Permanent Mission of Japan to the UN, Ministry of the Environment, Japan, Mr. Choudhury Rudra Charan Mohanty, UNCRD, UNDESA, Executive Director Environment Management Centre, India Dr. Prasad Modak, ladies and gentlemen)

Excellencies, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen. A very good afternoon. First of all warm greetings from the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Bangkok, Thailand.

At the very outset I would like to state that we are indeed delighted to take on the responsibility related to the proposed plans to house the Global Secretariat of the International Partnership for Expanding Waste Management Services of Local Authorities (IPLA) at our campus in Bangkok, Thailand.

As you maybe aware AIT celebrated its golden jubilee the year before last. Starting from being one of the first graduate schools in the region, we are proud of the contributions we have been made in the development of the region in the area of capacity building and involvement in many grass root level activities. We have a large network of partners and practitioners including local authorities in most of countries of the region. We are also seriously considering satellite campus in the region with the support of partners in three different countries. Our contribution in the area of environment management has been possible because of these close linkages. Based on our experience and networking platform we now represent in the region we now serve as the UN recognized ASEAN centre of excellence in Millennium Development Goals, we also have a CoE in Sustainable development in the context of climate change (SDCC) and in the area of waste management house the 3R (reduce, recycle, reuse) knowledge hub.

We are thus glad for the confidence entrusted on us by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), UN Centre of Regional Development (UNCRD), other supporting institutions and colleagues - to take up the role of the Global secretariat. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Ministry of Environment of Japan, UNCRD and UNDESA who were co-hosts for CSD19 Intersessional Conference for building partnerships for moving towards zero waste, held in February – for successfully organizing the globally significant meeting. The creation of the IPLA was certainly one of the key outcomes of that meeting. I am sure this will lead to further closer collaborations with the institutions represented at the meeting and help in expanding the concept behind IPLA. AIT is certainly committed to this effort, which is very much in line with one of own Institutes missions.

Our understanding is that in the long term IPLA mission is to facilitate expansion of waste management services worldwide by fostering closer partnerships between the various stakeholders including local authorities, national governments, financial institutions, the private sector, etc. This would involve mainstreaming Integrated Solid Waste management (ISWM) and 3R strategies, foster Public Private Partnerships (PPP) and most importantly create a practice oriented knowledge network and knowledge base in Waste Management. This platform could also then help the local authorities enhance and modernize national policies. The overall goal of IPLA will be to help local authorities move towards zero waste scenarios at a global level. This will be possible by going beyond the limits of thematic groups to more holistic “Eco-system” based solutions. A decentralized knowledge network with the international secretariat working in a central node, while working in close coordination with regional and sub-regional secretariats, appropriate working groups and teams of experts is envisaged.

The AIT administration which is keen to play a major role in this overall effort, will attempt on its own part to raise the required resources for this effort along with our partners. This will be done with the advice from twenty ambassadors of different countries to Thailand who comprise a major section of our Board of trustees and most certainly with the related donor community.

In order to increase access to knowledge and expertise, sharing of information and showcasing some of the success stories, AIT will also be housing the IPLA web portal. It will be designed so that it will be easily accessible to all stakeholders, with the prime objective to serve the needs of cities and municipalities around the world to expand waste management services.

In conclusion, the Asian Institute of Technology is pleased to host the global secretariat of the IPLA. AIT will, through active collaboration with IPLA partners, foster bridges between policy and practice across the local authorities in different regions of the world and build their capacities towards integrated solid waste management and application of 3R's. AIT hopes that IPLA will lead to paradigm shifts in local actions to address wastes as resources and move towards a resource efficient and zero waste society.

With this we mark the official launch of the IPLA, this day the 12th of May, 2011.

Thank you very much.