

Third Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific

The Third Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific took place from 23-25 January 2019 in Singapore. The Forum focused on the theme of the forthcoming March 2019 session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-4), ‘Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production (SCP).’ Around 575 representatives of governments, intergovernmental and international organizations, and Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (MGOS) attended the event, including 26 ministers and vice-ministers of environment, the President of Sri Lanka, the Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore, and the Prime Minister of Tuvalu.

Delegates shared their national actions and experiences of implementing solutions to SCP, discussed progress within the region on attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and provided their perspectives on draft UNEA resolutions proposed by Asia-Pacific countries, which addressed issues such as marine litter, ecosystem protection, sustainable infrastructure, dust storms, and waste management. During the ministerial segment, they took part in two high-level panels addressing policy support and financing, respectively.

The meeting comprised a day of deliberations by MGOS on 23 January, a senior officials’ meeting on 24 January, and a high-level ministerial meeting on 25 January. Delegates attended half-day field trips on 26 January, which showcased Singapore’s Marina Barrage downtown reservoir; its NEWater visitor centre on recycling of wastewater; and community food waste processing in Tampines.

The meeting was the first such Forum to be hosted by a Member State outside Bangkok, the regional secretariat of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

Six side events convened during the Forum on: empowering women in renewable energy, technology transfer and climate action; the Global Environment Outlook (GEO) for Youth in Asia Pacific report; electrifying the transport sector to beat air pollution; catalyzing a global agenda on climate change; incentivizing action to beat plastic pollution; and policy levers and financing for circular and green economies.

At the close of the meeting, they adopted the report of the senior officials’ meeting (UNEP/APEnvForum (3)/6)

and the Chair’s summary of the ministerial meeting (UNEP/APEnvForum (3)/7). This report covers the three days of meetings (23-25 January).

A Brief History of the Forum

UNEP Asia and the Pacific regularly convenes the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific to provide regional perspectives on the environmental dimension of sustainable development to relevant multilateral processes.

The Forum stems from a decision of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), which convened in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 13-22 June 2012. Paragraph 88(g) of the Rio+20 Outcome, ‘The Future We Want,’ which called for strengthening the regional presence of UNEP in order to assist countries, upon request, in the implementation of their national environmental policies. The Forums take place in the context of overall strengthening of UNEP and the creation of UNEA as a high-level decision-making body with universal membership.

UNEA convened in 2014, 2016 and 2017, and the regional Forums of environment ministers serve as preparatory processes leading up to these conferences. UNEA-2 also adopted a resolution to strengthen the regional environment ministerial forums as preparatory process for UNEA. Forum outcomes are communicated to various regional and global forums besides UNEA, including the Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development and the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).

The Forum replaces the Subregional Environmental Policy Dialogues that UNEP previously convened from 2003 to 2014.

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First Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific: The Forum took place in May 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand, and contributed to negotiations around the SDGs, which the UN General Assembly adopted in September 2015. Delegates identified regional challenges including: air pollution and its health impacts; the need for sound chemicals and waste management, including transboundary approaches; and promotion of the green and blue economies.

Second Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific: The Forum took place in September 2017 in conjunction with the seventh Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, and was organized jointly with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) in Bangkok, Thailand. The joint meeting, referred to as the First Asia-Pacific Ministerial Summit, reviewed implementation of sustainable development commitments and presented examples of policy and practice supporting delivery of the SDGs, multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and UNEA commitments. Ministers supported concerted action on issues including waste management, environmental health strategies, transboundary pollution, and marine litter.

Report of the Meeting

Major Groups and Other Stakeholders' Forum

MGOS convened on 23 January to discuss issues of SCP in the Asia-Pacific and draft a civil society statement feeding into UNEA-4 and the senior officials' and high-level ministerial segments of the Forum. They met in plenary and two panel discussions that addressed people's innovations to address environmental challenges, and grassroots action on SCP, respectively.

Opening: April Porteria and Prem Singh Tharu, Asia Pacific Civil Society Regional Representatives to UNEP, chaired the session.

Dechen Tsering, Regional Director, UNEP Asia and the Pacific, emphasized the importance of civil society engagement



Dechen Tsering, Regional Director, UN Environment

with UNEA. She noted the Asia Pacific region lags behind other regions in resource-use efficiency, and cited a need to develop the economic case for SCP. She also highlighted the need for circular economies and noted the power of social movements, such as the campaign to eliminate single-use plastics.

Hazri Hassan, Permanent Representative to UNEP, Singapore, said that while the Asia Pacific has enjoyed rapid growth, this has increased pollution and waste. He stressed that partnerships between government and civil society are critical to fostering innovation and driving societal change, noting Singapore's desire to become a "zero-waste nation."

Participants watched a video that highlighted the links between inequalities of wealth, power, and resources and environmental damage, and stressed the need for "development justice."

Indigenous rights activist Joan Carling, Philippines, presented the keynote address on the challenge of successfully investing in sustainable development to deliver progress for poor and marginalized communities while also protecting the environment. She said that the poor are being sacrificed in the name of development while big business is being enriched, and called for justice for environmental activists who have been killed or jailed, stating that economic growth should not lead to further inequality.



Delegates pose for a family photo on the first day of the conference



Joan Carling, Champion of the Earth, Lifetime Achievement Awardee

Grassroots inventor Pankajbhai Bachubhai Thesia, India, described technologies he has developed for farmers, mentioning, as examples: solar-powered fences that deliver a mild shock to wild animals that may damage crops; a motorcycle-powered plough; and a sensor-activated device to monitor irrigation.

Session 1: People's Innovations to Environmental

Challenges in Asia Pacific: Introducing the panel discussion, Elenita "Neth" Daño, Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration (ETC), stressed that technological solutions, such as biodegradable plastics, do not change how people produce and consume. She praised UNESCAP's programme on inclusive innovation, which focuses on grassroots-level solutions, as providing a necessary focus on social innovation.

Ajay Kumar Jha, Director, Centre for Community Economics and Development Consultants Society, India, moderated the session and engaged speakers on innovations and challenges occurring at the grassroots.

Tharu, Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact, stressed that the primary challenge facing indigenous people is displacement and dispossession of their ancestral lands and resources.

Sarojeni Rengam, Pesticide Action Network Asia Pacific, noted the contribution of industrial agriculture to climate change and said that the negative impacts of pesticides travel as far as the Arctic. She emphasized that agroecology can improve health, reduce pesticides, and increase sense of community.

Zakir Hossain, Founder and Chief, Krisoker Sor, called for local communities to be considered as partners in the development process, rather than just beneficiaries. He suggested that their frugal lifestyles could be a source of inspiration for SCP.

Oyunchimeg Myagmarjav, Executive Director, Institute for Future, emphasized the need for electric heating to reduce harmful air pollution during winter in Mongolia, when people burn coal and waste materials for heat.

Francis Kim Uphi, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) Asia Pacific, noted that most of the world's fossil fuel workers are in the Asia Pacific. He identified shortcomings in social protection policies as hampering a smooth transition to sustainable approaches in the region.

Panelists responded to audience comments on: co-creation of benefits, grassroots solutions, the need to recognize the

roles of women, respecting human and indigenous rights, and scaling up solutions. They called for upholding the human rights of indigenous peoples and providing compensation for their contributions to environmental protection. They emphasized the importance of the Just Transition Declaration from the 24th session of the Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the key role of women in this process.

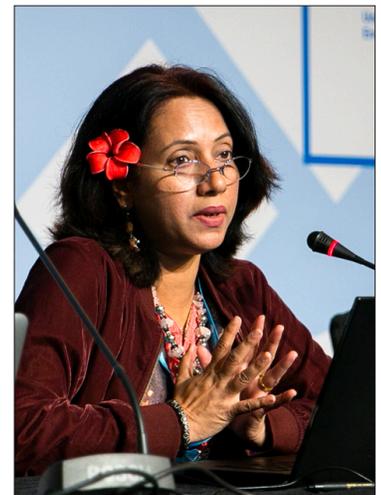
Session 2: Nurturing Nature through SCP from the Ground: Mrinalini Rai, Global Forest Coalition, moderated the panel Lorelei Covero, IBON International, noted universal recognition that consumption and production are vital to the success or failure of sustainable development, and said that people's assertion of their rights is key in achieving SCP.

Gomer Padong, Philippine Social Enterprise Network, discussed the diversity of social enterprises in the Philippines, noting 44% of the estimated 164,473 such enterprises are led by women. He said that SCP should be driven not by market forces but by satisfying needs.

Shailla Shahid, International Centre for Climate Change and Development, argued that subsidies and other perverse incentives can impede SCP, referencing the food sector's contributions to energy consumption and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. She urged considering the rights of animals and micro-organisms, in addition to human rights, and recommended developing marketing infrastructure and information systems, among other measures, that nurture Mother Earth.

Porteria, Centre for Environmental Concerns, noted the impacts of the 1995 Philippines Mining Act that liberalized the mining industry, arguing it produced an export-oriented, import-dependent economy. She discussed progress toward a "People's Mining Bill" to reorient the industry towards creating in-country processing capacity for industrial metals and supporting downstream industries, as well as demilitarizing mining operations and promoting respect for human rights. She explained that popular support for the Bill has increased recently, linked with a national movement in defense of the country's patrimony and national industries.

In the discussion, participants considered the need to link conversations with those from other processes and agreements, mentioning specifically the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Minamata Convention on Mercury, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.



Shailla Shahid, International Centre for Climate Change and Development, Bangladesh

They called for leveraging corporate social responsibility to promote human rights, building a movement for a possible legally binding agreement on marine plastic pollution; supporting ongoing efforts to eliminate micro-plastics; and upholding the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. They expressed concerns about the global South remaining a waste dumping ground.

Parallel workshops and plenary report-backs: In the afternoon, participants met in seven parallel workshops on agriculture, environmental challenges, systemic barriers, community partnerships, youth response, environmental governance, and just transition. Wali Haider, Joint Director, Roots for Equity, then moderated a report-back session.

Dhanushki Abhayaratne, Center for Poverty Analysis, on behalf of the agriculture group, stressed the challenge posed by economic liberalization and increased pesticide use, saying these have served to benefit elites rather than farmers. She called for policy coherence across sectors relating to agriculture and for greater use of agroecology and traditional knowledge.

Hossain, Krisoker Sor, on behalf of the community participation group, said that more synergies are needed among multilateral agreements, and noted the importance of community conservation protocols and monitoring. He also called for marginalized stakeholders to become leaders of their own development initiatives.

Julius Cainglet, Federation of Free Workers-ITUC, Philippines, on behalf of the just transition group, called for: focusing on reducing energy use; not giving licenses to new fossil fuel projects; integrating social and labor rights into transition thinking; increasing social protection; and recognizing that climate action will create jobs.

Ghimire, NGO Federation of Nepal, on behalf of the systematic barriers group, noted the challenges caused by migration, land tenure, waste management, and policy implementation. He also said that marginalized groups must be better communicated with, and called for scaling up people's innovations.

Anish Shrestha, Executive Director, Youth for Environment Education and Development Foundation, Nepal, on behalf of youth, highlighted that climate change is a burning issue for this group. He called for removing barriers to youth engagement and creating more opportunities for them to participate in policy



Subrata Sinha, Conference Secretary and Regional Environmental Affairs Officer, UN Environment Asia Pacific

processes. He closed by saying that the most important way to support youth is to trust them.

Daño, ETC, on behalf of the environmental governance group, noted geoengineering as a key example of an issue requiring better governance, and highlighted barriers stemming from lack of capacity and the absence of a gender lens. She also stressed the need for foresight and evidence-based policymaking.

Civil Society Organization (CSO) Statement:

Delegates edited the draft CSO statement on screen and agreed to finalize

it later in the evening. This statement was a key output of the first day and will provide input from the Asia Pacific region's CSOs into UNEA-4. The group focused on sections addressing key messages and important challenges, which included items on air and water pollution, land degradation, and climate change, among other issues.

Briefing on processes for CSOs: Subrata Sinha, Conference Secretary, UNEP Asia and the Pacific, briefed participants on opportunities for civil society interventions at UNEA-4, namely: providing written comments; engaging in meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives; participating in the Global Major Groups and Stakeholder Forum (GMGSF); participating in the Science-Policy-Business Forum at UNEA-4; intervening orally during meetings of the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (OECPR) and UNEA; and directly engaging member states.

Interactive session with UNEA-4 President: Porteria facilitated a dialogue with UNEA-4 President Siim Kiisler, Minister of Environment, Estonia.

Speakers from MGOS asked questions about: the place of human rights within UNEA; efforts to protect environmental



(L-R) **Dhanushki Abhayaratne**, Center for Poverty Analysis; **Md Zakir Hossain**, Founder and Chief, Krisoker Sor, Bangladesh; **Julius Cainglet**, Vice President, Federation of Free Workers - International Trade Union Confederation Asia Pacific; **Anish Shrestha**, Youth for Environment Education and Development Foundation; and **Ghimire Dilluprasad**, NGO Federation of Nepal

defenders; gender; and mineral resource extraction. They emphasized that geoengineering should not be promoted as a solution to climate change. They requested that civil society observers be permitted to participate in working groups and informal sessions.

Kiisler emphasized that a lot of work has gone into collecting input from civil society around the world and noted that 22 draft resolutions have been received for UNEA-4, 12 of which are from countries in the Asia-Pacific. Responding to questions, he said a side event on human rights and the environment has been organized for March 12, and stressed the difficulty of forcing the issue with governments in negotiations. He announced that Estonia has allocated EUR100,000 to support civil society representatives from developing countries to attend the GMGSF. He called for working towards international agreements on geoengineering and phasing out single-use plastics, and mentioned that other current UNEA priorities are waste generation and recycling, public procurement, and improving stakeholder engagement.

Responding to questions from the audience, Kiisler said he supported CSOs working directly with Member States and that during UNEA-4 he hopes to facilitate more interaction between science, business and civil society. He expressed concern that environmental issues are “stove-piped” into different negotiations such as on climate, biodiversity, or chemicals, and expressed hope that in the future they might be dealt with in an integrated manner.

Closing: Kiisler presided over the closing, as a representative of civil society took the stage to call for environmental justice, welcomed by cheers from participants. He encouraged CSOs to organize and engage so that the people’s voice is heard in the policy arena.

Senior Officials’ Meeting

A senior officials’ meeting took place on 24 January, during which delegates elected the bureau and adopted the provisional meeting agenda. Delegates shared their national actions and examples of good practice in implementing previous UNEA resolutions. Some countries introduced their proposed draft

resolutions for UNEA-4, and delegates gave feedback on the content. At the end of the day, they reviewed a draft capturing discussions of the day.

Opening: Ramon J.P. Paje, former Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Philippines, and former Asia Pacific Vice-President, UNEA-3 Bureau, chaired discussions preceding the election of the new bureau.

In a welcome address, Amy Khor, Senior Minister of State for Health, and for Environment and Water Resources, Singapore, said that continuing with business as usual risks leading us down a “catastrophic path to climate change.” She called for a shift from linear to circular economies and noted that Singapore has declared 2019 its “year towards zero waste.” Khor highlighted various recycling and circular economy initiatives in Singapore, such as plans for apartment buildings to install food waste digesters that deal with waste by creating fertilizer. She closed by calling for “all hands on deck,” encouraging participants to share ideas and best practices during the Forum

Tsering, UNEP Asia and the Pacific, expressed appreciation for Member States’ ownership of this regional process, noting that the Third Forum is the first meeting in the process to take place outside of UNEP Asia and the Pacific’s regional headquarters in Thailand. She emphasized that innovative solutions are diverse: some are technological, such as satellite tracking, and others are nature-based, such as mangrove and forest protection. Tsering also encouraged participants to share the successes and challenges they are facing related to SCP and affirmed UNEP’s support to help develop and scale up partnerships.

Naser Moghaddasi, Department of Environment, Iran, welcomed the theme of SCP at UNEA-4, urging delegates to “build a voice from our region to talk to UNEA.”

The Forum elected S.P. Singh Parihar, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, India, as Chair, and Joshua Wycliffe, Ministry of Waterways and Environment, Fiji, and Seong Suho, Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea, as Vice-Chairs.



Siim Kiisler, President of UNEA and Minister of Environment, Estonia



Amy Khor, Senior Minister of State for Health and Environment & Water Resources, Singapore

Delegates then adopted the provisional agenda.

Review of Implementation of UNEA Resolutions:

Delegates viewed a video on actions by UNEP in cooperation with its Asia Pacific Member States to address environmental challenges. Isabelle Louis, UNEP Asia and the Pacific, highlighted implementation in the region of 24 previous UNEA. She highlighted examples of action, including: the Clean Seas campaign, training of 100 government officers in adaptation to climate change, engaging youth in GEO-6, promoting livelihood opportunities for women in clean energy, and building capacity in countries for environmental monitoring and reporting.

China presented its cooperation with countries in the region, including a China-Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) information-sharing partnership to share capacity for data collection, processing and usage; a June 2018 China-ASEAN workshop on resource efficiency; and its participation in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Green Supply Chain Cooperative Network.

Japan announced it will host an acid deposition conference in 2020, which will include meetings of the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network of East Asia and the Asia Pacific Clean Air Partnership. He also noted Japan's support for the October 2018 World Circular Economy Forum in Yokohama, the regional 3R forums, a marine debris initiative, and standardization of technologies to monitor marine litter.

Timor-Leste highlighted environmental challenges, including biodiversity loss and waste management. He outlined plans to tackle plastic pollution through engaging with multinational corporations operating in the country.

Samoa announced that a national ban on single-use plastics such as straws, plastic bags, and Styrofoam items will come into force on 30 January 2019. She also highlighted fragmented policy approaches to consumption and production as a key barrier to achieving SCP, and called for support to build governance and policy linkages to address this.

New Zealand welcomed progress on countering marine plastic pollution and encouraged UNEP to keep working with states to "crowd in" funding for this purpose. He also emphasized the importance of aligning with the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and redirecting harmful subsidies, such as those supporting fossil fuels.

Bhutan noted its carbon-negative economy and emphasized the importance of building technical and vocational training capacity to support environmental action. He emphasized the importance of "eco-based" approaches and encouraged UNEA to focus on waste management and issues of water and air pollution, in order to not spread its efforts too thinly.

Iran highlighted national initiatives such as the creation of a national environmental fund and designated days without cars or plastic bags. She recommended stepping up action on adaptation, and tackling food waste through education and multi-sectoral cooperation.

Sri Lanka highlighted its focus on justice and human rights in environmental protection, and its current national priorities of reducing waste and motor vehicle air pollution.

Indonesia said it is incorporating SCP into long-term planning and is developing circular economies to tackle plastic pollution. He stressed Indonesia's focus on combatting climate change, sustainable development, and reducing poverty, and underscored the importance of traditional knowledge and the involvement of local communities to achieving these.

Pakistan noted the challenge posed by the Asia Pacific's large populations that are directly dependent on natural resources, shared Pakistan's progress on waste management, and highlighted its desire for further regional cooperation on sustainable rice management.

The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme highlighted ongoing cooperation among its Member States, including the development of a regional marine litter plan. He noted that most countries are developing bans on plastic bags, and stressed the need for technological support in providing alternatives.

MGOS said that implementation of SCP solutions gives a more significant role to the business sector than to civil society, and called for inclusion of marginalized voices in developing approaches to SCP.

The World Health Organization called for a strong alliance between ministries of health and ministries of environment to support the policy process.

Brunei highlighted its national initiatives to eliminate plastic pollution, increase energy efficiency, expand forest coverage, and improve fuel economy.

Mushtaq Memon, UNEP Asia and the Pacific, presented background information on resource efficiency in the Asia Pacific region. He highlighted Asia as a hub for manufacturing, and said thinking about circularity in business models can help close the loop from production to consumption, and will minimize resource use.



Mushtaq Memon, UN Environment

Tuvalu said it is important for countries to share experiences and best practices in SCP. Thailand noted that half of the region's population is living in urban areas and that waste management is a challenge. The Philippines emphasized the need for technology transfer.

The South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme highlighted initiatives among its members including developing a platform for knowledge sharing, establishing capacity building programs, and reducing microplastics in the environment.

The Youth for Environment, Education, and Development Foundation emphasized the negative health effects of chemicals in the environment and emphasized the right of the child to the highest standard of health.

Malaysia emphasized the need for taking a life-cycle approach to economic growth and highlighted national initiatives, including the requirement that all federal agencies implement a green growth plan.

The Asian Development Bank said that, by 2030, 75% of its operations will support climate mitigation and adaptation, with funding amounting to USD 80 billion for the 2019-2030 period.

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development noted the centrality of mountains to the global water supply and highlighted regional cooperation efforts to enhance the voice of mountains in the global dialogue.

Regional Input to UNEA-4: Wycliffe chaired the afternoon session. Stadler Trengove, UNEP, listed the draft resolutions for UNEA-4, which fall into five clusters: innovative solutions to environmental challenges and SCP; resource efficiency, chemicals, and waste; ecosystems and biodiversity management and protection; environmental governance; and programmes of work and related issues in UNEP. He noted that the deadline for submission of resolutions was 21 January 2019 and outlined the roadmap for their negotiation and adoption by UNEA.

Delegates then introduced resolutions that they had submitted.

Bangladesh described its resolution on sustainable nitrogen management, noting the GHG emissions of nitrogen fertilizers and the need to provide training for farmers.

Indonesia introduced draft resolutions on: scaling up SCP initiatives at the national level; developing a regional agenda for clean seas with a regional capacity center to protect the marine environment from land-based activities; sustainable mangrove management; and creating an international tropical peatlands center.

Mongolia highlighted the importance of mainstreaming the development agenda with an emphasis on cross-cutting issues, and introduced a draft resolution on sustainable infrastructure.

Noting the successful conclusion of the 2018 World Circular Economy Forum in Yokohama, Japan proposed draft resolutions on establishing a World Circular Economy Day and reducing marine plastic litter.

Sri Lanka introduced draft resolutions on: protecting the ecological balance of food chains through the conservation and sustainable use of mangroves; sustainable practices for food loss and waste management; and the sustainable management of plastic waste.

Iran highlighted the need for action on sand and dust storms, and introduced a draft resolution, emphasizing their health risks. He also noted shortcomings in water resource management and lack of protection of water-related ecosystems has increased the range of such storms.

Cambodia noted its actions, including decentralization of solid waste management and expansion of marine protected areas.

In a collective statement, CSOs welcomed the thrust toward building synergy and coherence among the Rio Conventions and other MEAs. They urged MEA parties to be robust in implementing actions, in view of the 15th session of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity that will take place in China, and current processes toward shaping a post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Among many



Chair Joshua Wycliffe, Ministry of Water, Waste and Environment, Fiji



Putera Parthama, Director General for Watershed and Protection Forest Management, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Indonesia



Jiaxue Peng, China

issues highlighted in the statement, they welcomed Costa Rica's draft resolution for UNEA-4 on women and the environment, and urged parties to collaborate to develop gender-responsive plans. They called for reducing plastic use at the global level through a new, legally-binding instrument, and urged parties to call for a mandate to negotiate such a treaty at UNEA-4. They also welcomed current negotiations on the proposed Global Pact for the Environment, noting the Pact represents both a risk and an opportunity, and emphasizing that it should result in "meaningful and substantive engagement."

Draft ministerial outcome from UNEA-4: Kiisler commended delegates for having been active in the UNEA process but urged further cooperation with those from other regions to merge draft resolutions, and to ensure that they are referring to the most recent draft of the ministerial declaration, dated 8 January 2019. He reiterated that the declaration had become more political, as requested, and restated his commitment to producing an ambitious and meaningful declaration for policymakers.

China stressed that the declaration must be realistic and questioned the feasibility of some of the 2025 targets and their alignment with existing targets for 2030 like the SDGs. She emphasized the need for a politically balanced declaration and suggested specific targets be added for capacity building, financing, and technology transfer for developing countries.

Mongolia supported the suggestion that targets be added for technology transfer and capacity building and reiterated the need for resolutions to support sustainable infrastructure.

Singapore agreed the declaration should be both realistic and ambitious and suggested further work could help focus and streamline the document.

Japan emphasized that the declaration should note the importance of innovation and improved environmental monitoring systems. He also said that a more flexible call to action is preferable due to the varied conditions across countries.

Iran urged keeping in mind the SDGs' overarching aim of eradicating poverty when preparing the draft declaration.

Kiisler agreed there is a need to balance ambition with reality, but that the decision should keep some degree of aspiration for transformational change.

Report of the Senior Officials Meeting: Parihar chaired the presentation of the report and sought comments and



Chair Surya Pratap Singh Parihar, Chairman, Central Pollution Control Board, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, India

questions from the floor. Delegates commented on: clarifying UN resolution references within the dust storm draft resolution; ensuring country statements are included in the report; noting the MGOS Forum that took place on 23 January; and adding a sentence to echo delegates' gratitude to the government of Singapore for hosting the Forum. Parihar took the comments on board and clarified that the draft sought to capture the essence of country statements, adding that he is willing to add more substance from the statements, if desired. The session closed with the delegates endorsing the draft report.

Ministerial Segment

Ministers convened in plenary and two Davos-style interactive panel sessions on innovative solutions for SCP during the day, which addressed policy support and financing, respectively. They shared many examples of innovations in their countries, and provided their perspectives on the proposed outcomes of UNEA-4, namely the draft resolutions and draft ministerial declaration. At the close of the day, they reviewed the report of the senior officials meeting from the previous day, and a Chair's summary of their own discussions.

Opening: Masagos Zulkifli, Minister of Environment and Water Resources, Singapore, welcomed high-level delegates, including the President of Sri Lanka and the Prime Minister of



Chair Masagos Zulkifli, Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, Singapore

Tuvalu. He called for embracing a new form of economic growth that does not rely on resource exploitation through, for example, new industries that generate products from waste. He announced that Singapore will launch its ‘zero

region by a rapidly growing and urbanizing population. He called for using holistic indicators to evaluate quality of life. He drew attention to Singapore’s adoption of a carbon tax, and its exploration of innovative technologies, such as floating solar farms hosted on reservoirs, which, he noted, are performing better than land-based solar panels. He also highlighted examples of cooperation between Singapore and India to create smart cities, and urged the sharing of experience and technology among countries. He noted that solutions cannot only be achieved from the top down, and that, “every citizen has a part to play in putting us on a path to sustainable development.”

Maithripala Sirisena, President and Minister of Mahaweli Development and Environment, Sri Lanka, emphasized that all people have the right to live in a safe environment. At the same time, he stressed, we are responsible for the sustenance of not only mankind, but of Earth as a whole and, as such, must strengthen the regenerative capacity of nature and protect it from chemical pollutants. He highlighted Sri Lanka’s proposed UNEA resolutions to address marine pollution from land-based activities and food waste. He called for broader regional cooperation on environmental issues, the development of “blue-green economics,” and investment in green infrastructure. Sirisena also described some of Sri Lanka’s current environmental initiatives such as investing in traditional irrigation schemes, and its plan to increase the country’s forest cover from 29% to 32% by 2030.

Enele Sosene Sopoaga, Prime Minister, Tuvalu, noted the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, calling on the global community to double its efforts to reduce GHG emissions. He said that the region’s environmental challenges, such as depletion of fish stocks caused by illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, requires a high-level response. He noted the lack of focus on sustainability at APEC and called for the creation of an Asia Pacific regional leaders’ sustainable development forum as a complement to existing trade-focused forums to convene leaders

from all sectors at the highest level to develop sustainability pathways. Sopoaga also highlighted the proposed ‘Pacific Islands climate change insurance facility,’ which aims to help rebuild countries after severe climate impacts. He appealed for financial support, noting Pacific countries themselves cannot afford the premiums that would underwrite the scheme, and floated the idea of a levy on the fossil fuel industry as a means of providing predictable funding.

Delegates elected the following bureau members for the ministerial segment: Zulkifli, as Chair; and Malik Amin Aslam Khan, Adviser to Prime Minister on Climate Change, Pakistan, and Fleming Sengebau, Minister of Natural Resources, Environment & Tourism, Palau. Delegates then adopted the agenda.

Policy Support for Innovative Solutions and SCP: Rico Hizon, BBC World News anchor, introduced the panel in the morning.

Zulkifli highlighted Singapore’s plan to introduce EPR for e-waste and plastics, including a requirement for producers to report the amount of plastic used in their products. As an example of innovation for zero waste, he highlighted a Singaporean company that is making ‘eco-bricks’ from recycled plastic and woodchips sourced from around the region. He emphasized that government must play a significant role as businesses lack incentives to move towards zero waste on their own. He stressed the importance of price signals to encourage people to value scarce resources, such as water, adding that Singapore aims to achieve a target of water use of 130 liters per person per day.

Aslam described the five priorities of a new “clean, green, Pakistan” campaign: trees, solid waste management, liquid waste management, sanitation, and clean drinking water. He shared the success of the ‘Billion Trees Tsunami’ initiative that planted a billion trees in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and a new, nation-wide ‘10 Billion Trees Tsunami’ campaign to plant that many over five years. He said attracting financing for ambitious environmental initiatives is facilitated by having a clear vision and framework, noting that Pakistan draws on a range of green finance options, including green bonds.

Cho Myung-rae, Minister of Environment, Republic of Korea, highlighted his country’s target to reduce waste by 20% and increase recycling to 85% from current levels by the middle of the next decade. He described the Republic of Korea’s promotion of public-private partnerships to increase resource efficiency, including through promulgating agreements that encourage businesses to adopt best practices in SCP.

Yeo Bee Yin, Minister of Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change, Malaysia, discussed solutions to plastic scrap imports to Malaysia, including repurposing the scraps for use in road building. She called for an international treaty to track plastic scrap movement between countries and labeling of plastics so they can more easily be recycled,



Maithripala Sirisena, President of Sri Lanka



Cho Myung-rae, Minister of Environment, Republic of Korea

suggesting a levy on non-recyclable plastic. Yeo also highlighted Malaysia's target of zero single-use plastics by 2030, and suggested that, in addition to 'reduce, reuse and recycle', a fourth R of 'replace' should be introduced. She suggested that a charge on plastic bags, for example, could create a revenue stream to support policy incentives and research and development of sustainable alternatives.

Dalton Tagelagi, Minister of Natural Resources, Niue, underscored the need for international cooperation to solve the problems that Niue faces as a small island developing State (SIDS), saying that, "what happens in one corner of the world affects us all because the ocean connects us all." He said there is a need to wisely select the type of products that are imported so that waste can be minimized and disposal does not become a problem, as has been the case with asbestos.

In interventions from the floor, Lao People's Democratic Republic stated that, in addition to marine litter, the issue of river litter and pollution deserves attention, referencing his country's share of the Mekong River. Zhejiang province, China, described its 15-year Green Rural Revival Program, which, he explained, has improved disposal and recycling practices with regard to household waste, sewage, and other emissions. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea described its current efforts on sustainability, called for strengthening cooperation to achieve common goals, and stressed that such cooperation "should not be politicized."

Thailand presented its efforts to promote organic products and said that the "3Rs" are important for achieving SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production. India highlighted its National Air Plan, launched in 2019; the work of the International Solar Alliance; and efforts to reduce fuel subsidies and improve industry efficiency.

Financing for innovative solutions and SCP: Hizon moderated this panel on Friday afternoon.

Yasuo Takahashi, Vice-Minister for Global Environmental Affairs, Ministry of the Environment, Japan, cited estimates of

USD 26 trillion needed for investing in energy, transport and other infrastructure to maintain growth in developing countries in Asia. He drew attention to the disparity between the current high carbon footprints in the larger developing countries in the region, and international targets for limiting global warming, adding that many companies in Japan have set their own targets to reduce GHG emissions to meet 2°C targets. He urged policymakers to develop SCP roadmaps so as to avoid building infrastructure that locks in unsustainable growth patterns.

Vipul Shah, Reliance Industries Limited, India, said that there is not enough money in the world to achieve sustainability unless business models themselves are sustainable. He advocated for innovating in production techniques and approaching these questions with a business and innovation mindset.

Esther An, City Developments Limited, Singapore, said that her company sees sustainability as an investment rather than a cost. She explained that, by tracking performance of energy consumption in its buildings, her company was able to become far more efficient, achieving savings on recurring costs as well as promoting its reputation and attracting institutional investors, particularly to its green bond issue—the first of its kind in Singapore.

Joyce Msuya affirmed the role of governments in setting the right conditions to promote private-sector investment in areas such as research and development to diversify out of plastic. She said that slower global economic growth highlights the opportunity for partnerships to fill the USD 2.5 trillion development investment gap to achieve the SDGs.

In discussion, Shah considered there is huge opportunity, and that the "green shoots" of financing through crypto-currencies, for example, have sprouted, but are still many years from coming to fruition. An expressed optimism about green financing, noting that institutional investors, such as pension funds, are looking for projects that promise high environmental and social benefits, and that directly address the SDGs.



Yasuo Takahashi, Vice-Minister for Global Environmental Affairs, Ministry of the Environment, Japan



High-level delegates pose for a family photo

Kazuhiko Takeuchi, President, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies, emphasized the importance of coordinating the decentralization of renewable energy with industry.

Msuya noted that public finance only accounts for a small share of total financial flows and that fintech could help developing countries leapfrog traditional development finance paradigms.

Shah suggested blockchain technology can help avoid double-counting and creative accounting in emission reductions. Msuya responded that the technology may be more appropriate to higher-income countries with established infrastructure, as low-income countries still require basic investments. Myanmar stressed the need for a greener financial system in general.

Timor-Leste described plans to make importers of single-use plastic pay an additional 30% tax to cover recycling costs. UNESCAP highlighted the significant savings possible from adopting resource efficiency measures, and recalled Member States' proposal to create a regional platform on resource efficiency. Shah noted investment frameworks must exist before money can flow. An mentioned her company's research into energy savings, circular economy and sharing economy models, and the possibility to turn waste into building materials, noting there are already five or six zero-energy buildings in Singapore.

The Farmers Major Group expressed concern about the corporate capture of seeds, land, water, and people's innovations, and suggested taxing corporations, such as those dealing in agrochemicals, to finance environmental monitoring, regulation and cleanup.

Responding to a question about the use of certain chemicals in a circular economy, Msuya said that governments can regulate such issues. Participants raised issues including: taxes on traffic

to reduce congestion in cities; the need to consider social capital in investments; ways to attract international capital to green projects; and the challenge of providing services across widely dispersed territories in SIDS.

In closing remarks, Takahashi recommended starting with green growth in local areas and expanding outward. An said partnership is the most powerful tool for multiplying resources and impact. Myusa called for a high level of ambition during UNEA-4.

Presentation of Senior Officials' Report and Draft

Outcome: Fleming Sengebau, Minister of Natural Resources, Environment & Tourism, Palau, chaired the session.

Seong Suho, Ministry of Environment, Republic of Korea, presented the draft report, which identified as key issues: the need to scale up technical assistance and capacity building; marine litter; air pollution; technology transfer; access to finance; and forums to support SCP, combatting pollution, water shortages, and dust storms.

Ministers adopted the final report of the senior officials of the third United Nations Environment Programme Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific (UNEP/APEnvForum (3)/6), which incorporated the previous day's feedback of 25 January 2018.

Final outcome: The report described senior official's segment of the Forum, which involved high-level opening addresses, the election of Bureau members for UNEA-4, and adopting the agenda, which had two main substantive components: reviewing the regional implementation of UNEA resolutions and providing regional input into UNEA-4. Input MGOS on each of these is also included.

Regarding the review of implementation of UNEA resolutions, the report noted that a number of regional priorities and issues were highlighted, including: recent regional collaborations; the

urgent need to support implementation and increase the ambition of NDCs; recent efforts by countries to phase out pollutants such as plastic and lead products; public mobilization campaigns for SCP; calls for cross-sector coordination; and redirecting subsidies with negative environmental impacts. It also clarified Secretariat functions for regional forums and elaborated processes and mechanisms for promoting Asia Pacific priorities at UNEA-4.

On regional input for UNEA-4, the report captured issues raised by delegates for consideration: developing a “transformational” approach to SCP; the need to consider the role of trade, waste management, and land and marine pollution with regards to SCP. The report describes the 12 draft UNEA resolutions submitted by Asia Pacific countries. It also highlights delegates’ reflections on the draft declaration for UNEA-4, including: ensuring the declaration is practical and not overly ambitious; including targets for capacity building, financing, and technology transfer; referencing sustainable infrastructure; emphasizing combatting marine litter; and framing poverty eradication as an overarching issue.

Presentation of Chair’s summary: Delegates discussed the Chair’s Summary (UNEP/APEnvForum (3)/7) and proposed changes including removing the words “eco-compensation” as well as other minor corrections. Zulkifli requested the Secretariat to take note of all the interventions and then adopted the Chair’s Summary.

Final outcome: The Chair’s summary reflects views expressed by Member States during the Third Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific. The summary contains Member States’ input to UNEA-4 via a summary of two panel discussions and nine draft resolutions. The summary further contains a draft declaration of the UNEA-4.

In the panel on Policy Support for Innovative Solutions and SCP, public-private cooperation was emphasized along with coordination across ministries. The summary further notes that environmental laws and regulations working in tandem with economic instruments are critical for SCP.

The panel on Financing for Innovative Solutions and SCP focused on infrastructure opportunities, green accounting and finance, engaging private business, integrating SCP with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), new financial technologies such as blockchain, and the need for further investment.

The Chair’s summary provides input on the following draft resolutions, and notes the country originating each proposal:

- Protection of the marine environment from land-based activities (Indonesia);
- Share and scale up SCP practices on the ground by the development of national SCP resource pool and promotion of citizenship of all stakeholders (Indonesia)
- Sustainable mangrove management for coastal protection (Indonesia)
- Sustainable peatland management for tackling climate change through the establishment of the International Tropical Peatland Center (Indonesia)
- Integrative approaches to sustainable infrastructure (Mongolia)



Joyce Msuya, Acting Executive Director of UN Environment, gives the closing remarks

- Protecting ecological balance of food chains by conserving and sustainably using the mangrove ecosystems (Sri Lanka)
- Food loss and waste management through accepted sustainable practices (Sri Lanka)
- Sustainable management of plastic waste including micro and nano-plastics through innovative solutions (Sri Lanka)
- Sustainable nitrogen management (Bangladesh)
- World Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency Day (Japan)
- Further action on marine plastic litter (Japan)
- Sand and dust storms (Iran)

On the draft declaration to be adopted at UNEA-4, the Chair’s summary notes, among other points, that the declaration should: be practical and not overly ambitious; emphasize North-South cooperation for achieving SCP; note solutions based on innovation for sustainable growth; and mention the need for capacity building in waste management and 3Rs on an international scale. The summary proposes that the UNEA-4 declaration should refer to poverty eradication as the overarching issue, and matters such as SCP as “vehicles and means to achieve SDGs.”

Closing: Myusa delivered closing remarks, saying that the Asia Pacific region is well positioned to lead the change that the world needs because of its dynamic private sector, its diverse set of policies across countries, and the entrepreneurial spirit that is “in the DNA” of the region. Zulkifli said he is privileged to take the message from the Forum to UNEA-4 to ensure the prosperity of the Asia Pacific region and to not deplete its resources. Cho Myung-rae, Minister of Environment, Republic of Korea, said that UNEA-4 will provide solutions for SCP and announced the Republic of Korea will host the 4th Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific in 2020.

Zulkifli closed the meeting at 6:16 pm and invited all delegates to a reception hosted at Singapore's downtown reservoir, Marina Barrage.

Upcoming Meetings

ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Marine Debris: The Government of Thailand will host this meeting to discuss marine debris management and deal with the large amount of plastic waste in coastal areas. **date:** 5 March 2019 **location:** Bangkok, Thailand **phone:** +662 203 5000 ext. 14351 **email:** info.mfa@asean2019.go.th **www:** <https://www.asean2019.go.th/en/meeting/special-asean-ministerial-meeting-on-marine-debris-2/>

Fourth Meeting of UNEA: UNEA-4 will take place on the theme of 'Innovative Solutions for Environmental Challenges and SCP.' In preparation for this meeting, the OECPR will convene from 4-8 March 2019. **dates:** 11-15 March 2019 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** Jorge Laguna-Celis, Secretary of Governing Bodies **phone:** +254-20-7623431 **email:** unep.sgb@unep.org **www:** <http://www.unep.org/about/sgb>

2nd Meeting for the Global Pact for the Environment: The Pact aims to be the first international treaty to address the matter of environment as a whole, based on recognizing the right to live in a healthy environment, and the duty to take care of the environment. **dates:** 18-20 March 2019 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **phone:** +33-652-043-706 **email:** contact@globalpactenvironment.org **www:** <https://globalpactenvironment.org/?lang=en>

3rd Meeting for the Global Pact for the Environment: Following the two international covenants of 1966 - one related to civil and political rights, the other related to economic, social and cultural rights – negotiations toward this Pact seek to establish a third generation of fundamental rights: the rights related to the protection of the environment. **date:** 20-24 May 2018 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **phone:** +33-652-043-706 **email:** contact@globalpactenvironment.org **www:** <https://globalpactenvironment.org/?lang=en>

HLPF: The seventh HLPF, convening under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council of the UN, will review Goals 4 (education), 8 (decent work), 10 (inequality), 13 (climate action) and 16 (peaceful and inclusive societies) as well as Goal 17 (partnerships), which is reviewed every year. **dates:** 8-19 July 2019 **location:** New York, US **contact:** UNDESA <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/contact/> **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>

2019 Climate Summit: The UN Secretary-General will convene this Summit on the theme 'A Race We Can Win. A Race We Must Win.' The Summit seeks to promote climate action in six areas: energy transition, climate finance and carbon pricing, industry transition, nature-based solutions, cities and local action, and resilience. **dates:** 23 September 2019 **location:** New York, US **contact:** <http://www.un.org/en/contact-us/index.html> **www:** <http://www.un.org/en/climatechange/>

HLPF under UN General Assembly auspices: This meeting will take place at the level of heads of state and government. HLPF meetings of this kind are scheduled to take place every four years, and this is the first such meeting. **dates:** 24-25 September 2019 **location:** New York, US **contact:** Office of the UNGA President **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf>

High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development: This meeting will review progress on commitments made in the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda. **dates:** 26 September 2019 **location:** New York, US **contact:** Financing for Development Office, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs

High-Level Review of Progress on SAMOA Pathway: This meeting will review progress on commitments made at the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in 2014. **dates:** 27 September 2019 **location:** New York, US **contact:** Office of the UN General Assembly President

Fourth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific: The Forum will take place ahead of UNEA-5, which is scheduled for 2021. **dates:** October 2020 (TBC) **location:** Republic of Korea **contact:** Subrata Sinha, Conference Secretary, UNEP Asia and the Pacific.

Glossary

APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CSO	civil society organization
EPR	extended producer responsibility
ETC	Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration
GEO	Global Environment Outlook
GHG	greenhouse gas
GMGSF	Global Major Groups and Stakeholder Forum
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MGOS	Major Groups and Other Stakeholders
OECPR	Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives
SAMOA Pathway	SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	small island developing States
UNEA	UN Environment Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCAP	UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific