

FINAL REPORT

Regional Workshop on National Sustainable Development Strategies for Asia and the Pacific

UN/ESCAP, Bangkok, Thailand

29 to 31 October 2003

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

1. Agenda 21, the main outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, called upon countries to adopt national sustainable development strategies (NSDS), which would build upon and harmonize the various sectoral economic, social and environmental policies and plans that are operating in the country.

2. The 1997 Special Session of the UN General Assembly set a target date of 2002 for the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development (NSDS). It also reaffirmed that all sectors of society should be involved in their development and implementation. The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), held in August 2002, in its Plan of Implementation (JPOI) urged states to take immediate steps to make progress in the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development (NSDS) and begin their implementation by 2005.

3. In November 2001 an International Forum on National Sustainable Development Strategies, was convened by UNDESA in Accra, Ghana. The meeting identified a list of key characteristics constituting a sound national sustainable development strategy and provided a first international understanding of what constitutes such a strategy. A Guidance Document¹, outlining key characteristics of a NSDS, was prepared based on the recommendations of the meeting. The meeting also agreed that a NSDS is a tool for informed decision-making that provides a framework for systematic thought across sectors and territory. It should not be seen as a new plan, or as a separate planning process outside existing ones, but rather as the adaptation of existing processes, in compliance with sustainable development principles.

¹ "Guidance in preparing a national sustainable development strategy: Managing sustainable development in the new millennium". Background Paper No. 13, Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the preparatory committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Second preparatory session 28 January-8 February 2002.

4. In approaching the challenge of developing national strategies for sustainable development by 2005, many countries are currently endeavouring to reach this goal. The Asia and Pacific workshop on NSDS was organized in response to a request from the Asian and Pacific region to convene a meeting to support countries in their efforts to implement NSDSs. The Workshop was held in Bangkok, from 29-31 October 2003 and was organized and co-sponsored jointly by UNESCAP, UNDP and the Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DSD/DESA).

B. Objectives

5. The objectives of the Workshop were as follows :

- a) Assess regional progress made in NSDS development and implementation and explore how countries can move toward the goal of 2005, by using already established country level planning frameworks for sustainable development;
- b) Help build regional capacity through exchange of experiences and lessons learned in NSDS, to raise awareness of options for institutional structures, legal reforms and capacity-building efforts at the national level, as well as to promote multi-stakeholder participation in decision-making;
- c) Promote inter-regional capacity- building, cooperation and networking through exchange of national experiences in developing and implementing a NSDS;
- d) Explore how global and regional inter-governmental institutions, NGOs and IGOs could further the goal for all countries to be in the process of implementing their NSDS by 2005;
- e) Provide options for decision-making through monitoring and assessment of sustainable development at the national level.

C. Participants

6. A list of participants is attached as an Annex to the report

II. WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

A. Opening Session

7. Ms. Keiko Okaido, Deputy Executive Secretary and Officer-in-Charge of ESCAP made a welcoming statement. She said that for more than two decades, the Asian and Pacific region exhibited robust economic and social growth that made many of its countries a model for other

countries of the world. This economic and social growth is likely to continue and is the bedrock for redressing poverty and environment issues in the region. However, rapid economic expansion was also accompanied by adverse environmental impacts. The new face of poverty is evident, she said, in the increasing prevalence of slums, low levels of sanitation and water supply services, and growing solid waste. Finding the right balance between economic growth, poverty reduction and environmental improvements is precisely the cornerstone of the sustainable development agenda. It is in this context that the Regional Workshop was organized. She pointed out that the Workshop was designed to help countries in the region meet the commitment to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI). The main emphasis of the Workshop was for countries in the region to harmonize and integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development into the mainstream planning processes. Since UNCED in 1992, many governments have already developed national strategies and plans that are now the basis of their programmes. She emphasized that the preparation of an NSDS does not call for the preparation of another plan, rather it was mainstreaming of sustainable development into present strategies and plans. She assured participants that UNESCAP stands ready to support countries in the region to meet the commitments made in the JPOI. The JPOI and the recent CSD 11 called upon the Regional Commissions to play an active role in promoting sustainable development and in providing assistance especially to the developing countries in strengthening their capacities to meet the challenges of sustainable development.

8. Ms. JoAnne Disano, Director, Division for Sustainable Development, DESA, in her introductory remarks recognized that the coming together of thirty-one countries, IGOs and NGOs from the Asia Pacific region showed a real commitment not only to issues of sustainable development, but more specifically to making progress on National Sustainable Development Strategies. She noted that the World Summit on Sustainable Development, WSSD, produced a Plan of Implementation that includes, among other things, the goal that all countries should be in the process of implementing national sustainable development strategies by 2005. But quite aside from implementing, many countries currently have problems simply to formulate a national sustainable development strategy. She recognized that countries face a variety of requests from international organizations to prepare various kinds of strategies and plans to address a wide range of international agreements and mandates. Mutual support and cooperation would play an important role in solving problems of sustainable development at the local, national and international levels. National sustainable development strategies can be a useful modality for the development of the whole region. Only by building bridges of cooperation between countries and peoples, she said, could we hope to achieve a more sustainable world. It was her hope that the workshop would make an important contribution to assisting countries in meeting the WSSD goal of implementing national sustainable development strategies by 2005.

9. Ms. Anita Nirody, the UNDP Regional Coordinator in Asia and Pacific for *Capacity 2015*, in her opening remarks noted, that the principles of sustainable development are reflected in the Millennium Declaration and in the MDGs with the overarching goal of reducing poverty. Advancing towards sustainable development and the achievement of the MDGs are thus mutually reinforcing. Strategic approaches to development are increasingly being undertaken at the country levels in the Asia Pacific region – focusing on more participatory, integrated and flexible approaches to policy planning and implementation. At the country level, the UN system

is channeling its support to countries through the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which serves as an integrating framework of assistance. UNDP stresses the importance of capacity building in advancing towards the MDGs and sustainable development. Through the Capacity 2015 initiative, UNDP will support local sustainable development activities for the countries in the region, including local implementation of sustainable development strategies, MEAs and in helping to reduce SIDS' vulnerability. UNDP also assists in preparing national MDG reports and together with ESCAP, prepared a Regional MDG report.

B. Election of officers

10. The meeting elected Mr. Malik Mohammed Saeed Khan, Member, Planning Commission of Pakistan as the Chairperson of the meeting. Mr. Shamsuddin Haji Ab Latif, Deputy Director-General of the Environment, Department of Environment, Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment, Malaysia was elected as the Vice-Chairperson.

III. PANEL DISCUSSIONS

A. Overview of national sustainable development strategies and other relevant strategies

11. The UN/DESA representative began the session with a presentation on National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSDS). This comprehensive presentation covered global targets and initiatives that had been taken in this area by the UN and OECD and the global status of implementation of these strategies, as well as the evolution of NSDS over time, its definition, principles and characteristics. She also explained the process of participation, the reasons why NSDS required constant improvement, key processes leading to a NSDS and, finally, critical steps in the formulation and implementation of a NSDS.

12. The UNEP representative stated that many policies and strategies, such as National Environmental Action Plans, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, Poverty Reduction Strategies, Forest Policies and Energy Policies, have been developed with the support of multilateral and bilateral agencies. These policies and plans, however, are disjointed and need to be integrated into a NSDS. He further explained that the process of NSDS development not necessarily requires new policies or strategies; instead it can be built on existing strategies or plans by integrating economic, social and environmental objectives.

B. The Role of Major Groups in national sustainable development strategies

13. The panel on the role of Major Groups in national sustainable development strategies, moderated by UN/DESA consisted of five major groups representing: Youth, Farmers, Business and Industries, NGOs and Indigenous People.

14. The Chairman of the ICC Thailand Commission on Energy and Environment noted that the international business community represented by ICC is committed to furthering sustainable development. Business is the prime source of innovation, commercialization, new technologies, and information. Business recognizes the clear benefits of sustainable development and would focus on the following priorities: create jobs and wealth; support government regulatory reform, enforcement and institution building; research and developing new technologies; constant improvement of environment management practices applying new standards; maximize social and environmental benefits; consultation with local communities; promote good environmental practices in investment and operations. Governments should promote voluntary partnership with the private sector. Cooperation should be multilateral with national action, with good governance, open markets for economic growth and with social improvement and effective protection of the environment.

15. The Global Coordinator for the CSD Youth Caucus provided a brief status report on the situation of youth in relation to access to information, education, employment and livelihoods as well as participation and engagement. She presented some programs and projects that youth organizations are doing in relation to their commitments and their role in sustainable development such as, awareness raising, leadership and capacity building workshops and programs. Inter-cultural exchanges to share information, experiences, best practices and learning were also mentioned. The issues of engagement and participation in relevant sustainable development processes at various levels, and advocacy roles were covered. She stressed the fact that although young people are taking the lead and initiative in developing leadership potentials among the members of their sector, there is need to provide assistance for youth development at various level. The creation of National and local youth councils for the participation of youth in official government delegations and representation in major and relevant sustainable development processes was highlighted. It was pointed out that youth are the largest group of stakeholders for sustainable development.

16. The representative of the Indigenous Peoples of the Hilltracts NGO Forum noted that the rights and roles of indigenous peoples are still not fully recognized by many national, regional and international authorities and that recognition of the culture, laws, traditions and systems of self-government of indigenous peoples is essential. Equal and full participation in all aspects of planning for a sustainable future, which includes women, men, elders and youth must be encouraged and supported. Enhanced access to resources and more adequate funding is needed to support effective participation by indigenous groups.

17. The Chairman of the Asian Regional Committee of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) explained, that agriculture plays a crucial role in any sustainable development initiative, particularly in the Asian region. The bulk of the population in Asia resides in the rural areas, and are dependent on small-scale farming for their livelihood. Similarly, the farming sector is often the locus of problems that impinge on sustainable development – poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and so on. By the same token, agriculture and the small farmers provide the best hope and opportunity for attaining sustainable development goals at the local, regional and global levels. Accordingly, farmers should be accorded an active role, and they should assume such a responsibility, in the planning,

implementation and monitoring of sustainable development programmes. As partners in the development effort they should ensure that programmes directly benefit their sector even as they contribute to overall development. They should also mobilize the active participation and contribution of small farmers at the grassroots level in the development effort. Finally, farmers should strengthen their organizations at the local and international levels in order to consolidate their resources, participate more effectively in the development process and advocate their interests in various fora. This is particularly important, because sustainable development invariably involves conflicting interests and requires painful policy reforms and politically difficult changes in government priorities and strategies.

18. The Director of the Southeast Asia Regional Initiatives for Community Empowerment pointed to the positive experience of the Philippines which provided for the direct involvement of NGOs in the planning, formulation and implementation of national sustainable development strategies, noting that this involvement was the product of favorable international developments in the sustainable development field and the existence of a conducive political climate at the national level that encouraged direct civil society participation in decision-making processes. The Philippine experience demonstrated that NGOs can be effective and constructive partners in the development and implementation of national sustainable development strategies when the government recognizes their value provides sufficient political space and treats NGOs and other stakeholders as equal partners. She cited five challenges facing governments in involving NGOs and other major groups in the national sustainable development strategies process. These included: (1) how to involve as many relevant NGOs as possible in the process; (2) how to involve those NGOs outside the capital city; (3) how to increase public awareness of national sustainable development strategies; (4) how to sustain the active participation of NGOs and major groups and (5) how to ensure that national sustainable development strategies are integrated into the broader national planning framework.

D. National Implementation of NSDS

19. The panel discussion on national implementation was moderated by the UNDP Resident Representative and UN Resident Coordinator. Representatives of two national governments (Pakistan and the Philippines) and one sub-regional organization (SPREP) made presentations on national level implementation of sustainable development strategies.

20. The resource person from SPREP talked about the lessons learned by Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) in the process of completing National (sustainable development) Assessment Reports [NARs] as foundation documents for the Barbados Plan of Action and its 10-year review as well as the development of national sustainable development strategies. He noted that for most Pacific Island Countries and Territories their National Assessment Reports (NARs) for WSSD was the focus to engage governments and non-governmental stakeholders in a process to implement sustainable development. The consultations encouraged or strengthened the integration of economic, social and environmental goals and were structured to feed into the preparations for WSSD as well as being foundation documents for the generation of NSDSs. Financial assistance for Pacific Island Countries and Territories to prepare for the WSSD was not timely or adequate and limited the extent of completion of NARs.

This situation also inhibited full participation, analysis of issues and establishment of priorities. As such, the work is now being coordinated by SPREP for the 10-year review of Barbados Plan of Action. Preparations now focus on national engagement and directing further resources to the national level to augment the NARs to: (1) concentrate on institutional development and implementation; (2) identify priorities for improvement to and implementation of the Pacific Umbrella Initiatives; (3) develop national based Initiatives; (3) provide the basis for the further development of indicators for sustainable development; and (4) assist planned or ongoing national environmental/resource use planning, assessment and reporting efforts.

21. The representative of the Philippines shared the Philippine experience in implementing its national sustainable strategy and her presentation covered the following: (a) creation of the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD); (b) formulation of the Philippine Agenda 21 (PA 21) and its assessment and enhancement; and (c) localization efforts on PA 21. While the Philippines is well on the road to implementing its Agenda 21 commitments, it was noted that a lot remains to be done to sustain gains achieved so far and to continue the momentum in its implementation. Further partnerships with the donor community need to be explored and pursued. The recommended focus of future interventions include the following: (1) local sustainable development governance; (2) information and education campaign; (3) social marketing; (4) project development; (5) resource generation and fund sourcing; (6) strategic development planning; and (7) community mobilization and organizing.

22. The presentation on Pakistan's experience in NSDS implementation was primarily based upon findings of the mid-term review of the Pakistan National Conservation Strategy. The major focus was on lessons learned during the process of strategy formulation and implementation. Significant observations were made in the areas of strategy design and management processes, stakeholders' involvement at various levels and resource mobilization for strategic interventions. She provided a comprehensive list of lessons in the national sustainable development strategy process in Pakistan.

23. During the discussions on NSDS development and implementation it was noted, that an effective national sustainable development strategy process may include, *inter alia*: (i) a shared vision of sustainable development; (ii) extensive participation and ownership of relevant stakeholders, including women, indigenous peoples, farmers, youth and other major groups as well as the poor and the marginalized, throughout the strategy processes, with awareness-building and information exchange and a clear understanding of the benefits accruing to the participants; (iii) a national level coordinating mechanism under strong political leadership; (iv) transparency and active communication among the relevant government offices and the key stakeholders as well as the public at large; (v) regular and objective research, policy analysis and monitoring which focuses on sustainability so that stakeholders understand changing contexts, future prospects, needs and responses, and develop a learning approach; (vi) ownership and commitment at all levels by senior-level government officials and all other stakeholders; (vii) innovation and experimentation for identifying and testing solutions that make sense in local or sectoral contexts, especially by creating enabling conditions for the private sector, NGOs and local communities; (viii) the utilization and integration of local resources, know-how and customary practices into current standards and systems; (ix) better linkages between planning

and implementation at the local/community, provincial and national levels, including cooperative mechanisms that more effectively leverage the relative strengths existing at the different levels of government; (x) decentralization and empowerment consistent with, and supportive of, the devolution of power, the decentralization of administrative authority, the de-concentration of professional functions and the distribution of resources to the provincial and local levels; and (xi) coordination, facilitation and partnerships for managing the broad scope of participation required by sustainable development, especially at the government level;

E. The Role of Inter-governmental organizations in promoting national sustainable development strategies

24. The representatives of four inter-governmental organizations made presentations including: UNESCAP, The South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), ASEAN and the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme, SACEP

25. The representative of SPREP outlined in general terms the regional coordination role of the Secretariat for environmental protection and sustainable development, in partnership with its sister organizations of the Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific (CROP). SPREP often acts as an intermediary between the International community, and national and sub-national stakeholders. Roles particular to the preparations for the Review of the Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA+10) and moving towards developing NSDSs were outlined. Basically this on the front of coordinating policy development among CROP as well as technical services and backstopping for NSDS development and integration with national and sub-national planning processes. In addition SPREP has a responsibility to further develop the use of WSSD Umbrella Initiatives as a means for better coordination and financing for sustainable development. SPREP through the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG), a multi-CROP coordination mechanism with regional NGO representation, continues to prepare leading papers and briefings, as well as training in international negotiations.

26. In her presentation, the representative of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) explained that in 1997, the Heads of State and Government of ASEAN articulated a long-term vision called “ASEAN Vision 2020” which reflects the desire of ASEAN to pursue a more sustainable path to development. The Vision calls for “... a clean and green ASEAN with fully established mechanisms for sustainable development to ensure the protection of the region’s environment, the sustainability of its natural resources and the high quality of life of its peoples.” ASEAN 2020 forms the sustainable development framework for member countries and the goals of the Vision are achieved through a series of medium term action plans. ASEAN provides the forum to facilitate the development and implementation of integrated regional sustainable development policies, strategies and action plans, which supports and complements the implementation of NSDS. ASEAN also strives to provide a conducive regional environment to enhance the implementation of national sustainable development strategies. The ASEAN Secretariat provides, among others, coordination support and technical advice to the various ASEAN bodies. Modalities of assistance to its member countries include capacity building programmes; exchange of information and experiences; public awareness and education, joint

programmes and more specific activities in addressing transboundary issues for example the implementation of the Regional Haze Action Plan.

27. The UNESCAP representative noted that ESCAP assists member countries in formulating and implementing NSDS through its work programme. It provides technical assistance and advisory services towards these endeavors upon the request of the governments. In addition, it holds training workshops, implements pilot projects, compiles and disseminates best practices and promotes multi-stakeholder partnerships. It is currently implementing a major development account project on strategic planning and management under which four guidelines were prepared on Strategic Planning and Management, in general, and the water and energy sector, in particular. These were widely disseminated. Based on these guidelines a number of training workshop are being held at regional, sub-regional and national levels. The regional and sub-regional workshops enabled training of master trainers while national workshops are being organized to examine the ways and means to orient the existing policies and strategies along the sustainable development path. The workshops also provide mechanisms for their monitoring and evaluation of national sustainable development strategies during the implementation process.

28. The representative of South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) made a presentation on the role of this sub-regional organization in promoting NSDS. Its activities include: regional coordination, exchange of information and ensuring political commitment. SACEP assists its member countries in establishing and possible functioning of NCSDs through, *inter alia*, briefing to the Heads of State of those countries. In cooperation with other agencies, SACEP also brings together various stakeholders for awareness raising with regard to NSDS, training on undertaking stakeholder analysis, developing NSDS vision and objectives, etc. SACEP is currently carrying out a review of its programme activities for planning the next programme cycle, taking into account the WSSD decisions.

F. Monitoring and Assessment for sustainable development

29. The DESA representative provided an overview of the CSD Work Programme on Indicators of Sustainable Development, noting the origins and mandate of the programme, both in Agenda 21 and in the decisions of the CSD. He outlined the key criteria for selecting indicators and discussed the theme and sub-theme framework used for organizing them.

30. The representative of UNDP in Cambodia presented a case study in development of targets and indicators for the Millennium Development Goals. She mentioned that Cambodia has added one more new goal (on de-mining and assistance to victims of landmines) to the eight Goals of the Global MDGs, to reflect the specific challenges Cambodia is facing today. She outlined the main characteristics of the programme as it developed in Cambodia, citing both achievements and obstacles.

31. The representative of UN ESCAP noted the efforts of his organization have concentrated on providing assistance to countries of the region on both the CSD and Millennium Development Goals indicators programmes. ESCAP played an active role in supporting those countries of the region that tested the CSD indicators and is actively helping countries with the Millennium

Development Goals requirements. It was noted that UNESCAP also conducts an assessment of sustainability trends in the region through a participatory process, which culminates in preparing the State of the Environment report for Asia and the Pacific every five years.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

32. Based on the discussions in the break-out sessions and during the panel dialogues, it was agreed, that prerequisites for implementing national plans and sustainable development strategies include peace and stability, sound macro economic policies, strong political commitment, functional democratic institutions and proactive community-based sustainable development initiatives. The workshop also made the following recommendations:

A. National Sustainable Development Strategies

- 1) National policies and plans should be translated into concrete actions for implementation based on priorities established in the national sustainable development strategy. Integrated national plans or strategies for sustainable development should be based on identified national priorities. These plans and strategies should encompass international commitments and integrate the key principles of sustainable development, including the economic, social and environmental dimensions, taking into account country specific conditions and requirements.
- 2) Capacity building needs for the implementation of sustainable development strategies, plans and programmes should be clearly identified as part of the strategy development process so that capacity building efforts and related funding requirements could be specifically targeted and intensified. This should include the training of decision-makers and high – and middle level specialists in sustainable development concepts, issues and methodologies. Technical and financial assistance from the donor community for capacity building to improve national efforts in implementing national sustainable development strategies remains a critical need and should cover technical, policy, planning and operational capabilities as well as the development of appropriate tools and techniques.
- 3) National level Major Groups and NGOs should, to the extent possible, seek to establish interactive networking of organizations for the purpose of more effective representation and participation with governments in the strategy process. At the same time, governments should provide sufficient political space and assistance to foster effective civil society participation through strengthening capacity and other forms of support, as appropriate. Consideration may be given to methods and procedures for accreditation and recognition of civil society groups to ensure appropriate levels of responsibility and accountability in fulfilling their roles.
- 4) The private sector should be engaged in the implementation of national sustainable development strategies by contributing know-how, technologies and financial resources,

through e.g. public-private partnerships, while recognizing that the ultimate responsibility for formulating and implementing national sustainable development strategies rests with the government.

5) Exchanges of experiences at national, regional and international levels on implementing national sustainable development strategies should be further promoted.

B. Monitoring and Assessment

6) An integrated system for monitoring and assessment of sustainable development implementation needs to be developed and/or strengthened with particular attention to the environmental dimension, including environmental auditing and EIA, which may require more technology-based monitoring systems. Although resource intensive, GIS information systems, for example, can be used to harmonize and standardize environmental data.

7) Political leaders, parliamentarians and senior decision-makers need to be more aware of and develop the capacity to effectively handle technical and policy issues related to monitoring and assessment systems and indicators. Such awareness can result in stronger political commitment to use these systems. Legislative empowerment for monitoring and assessment by way of budgetary allocations, regulatory frameworks and supervisory oversight should be promoted, as required. Statisticians and others engaged in data collection and analysis should be given training in monitoring and assessment for the environment.

8) The capacities of national and local government officials responsible for monitoring and assessment should be strengthened, in order to improve the overall effectiveness of monitoring and assessment systems. For some countries of the region, capacity-building efforts should be focused on data generation and identification of the relevant indicators. Independent monitoring and assessment either by a professional institution or by civil society groups, where appropriate, may be considered, and capacity building for major groups in monitoring and assessment should be strengthened for that purpose.

9) Specific targets and goals at the formulation stage of national sustainable development strategy preparation should be included to facilitate eventual monitoring and assessment of its implementation. Indicators for monitoring NSDS should be considered a tool for decision-making and not an end in themselves. They should be able to measure progress in implementation, and not just describe the status quo. Baseline indicators should be set according to the country specific planning cycle and available data.

10) Data required for monitoring and assessment in sustainable development are often scattered with collection and analysis carried out on a sectoral basis in different government agencies. While a uniform and standardized approach should be applied, to the extent possible, the gradual and incremental improvement of data should not wait until the application of more wholistic approaches. The use of external consultancies for data collection, analysis and monitoring should be minimized, but where used, the transfer of

knowledge and local capacity-building should be emphasized. Processes of monitoring and assessment should be as transparent and open as possible with data made publicly accessible, as appropriate. Financial and human resources constraints need to be addressed in order to improve data collection and analysis.

11) Certain international benchmarks, such as the qualitative ones and process indicators, may need to be adjusted to reflect national conditions and needs. Internationally established targets in some cases may serve as a reference point for setting realistic targets in specific national contexts. International benchmarks may also need to be adopted to reflect national conditions and needs. The involvement of multi-stakeholders is crucial in defining benchmarks that are useful and practical. Countries should develop their own criteria for the selection of country-specific indicators based on national priorities and interests as well international reporting requirements where appropriate

12) International reporting requirements and voluntary reporting requests should be streamlined and simplified to reduce the burden on countries.

C. The Way Forward

33. The meeting felt that the ongoing work on national sustainable development strategies should be strengthened at the national level to fulfill the commitments made in Agenda 21 and reaffirmed in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Intergovernmental organizations should continue to promote sustainable development at the regional level, and further support and complement efforts to implement NSDS. Assistance from the regional and international organizations should be enhanced, particularly through exchange of experience, capacity building, technical assistance, documentation and dissemination of best practices. The meeting also felt that there should be better exchange of information, coordination and cooperation between regional organizations. Ensuring and strengthening the participation of the major groups was considered important for the effective development, implementation and monitoring of NSDS. Such participation would require the establishment of effective mechanisms for the meaningful participation of major groups in these processes.

ANNEX**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS****AFGHANISTAN**

Mr. Doust Mohammad Amin, Director-General, Planning Department, Ministry of Irrigation, Water Resources and Environment

Mr. Najibullah Patan, President of Central Authority for Water Supply & Sewerage

AZERBAIJAN

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VIET NAM

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RESOURCE PERSONS

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Division for Sustainable Development

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Ms. Hiroko Morita-Lou, Chief, National Information Analysis Unit

Ms. Kirsten Rohrmann, Sustainable Development Officer, National Information, Monitoring and Outreach Branch

Mr. Lowell Flanders, Resource Person

UNITED NATIONS BODIES

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Mr. J.K. Robert England, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, Bangkok, Thailand

Ms. Anita Nirody, Regional Coordinator for Capacity 2015, Asia and the Pacific

Ms. Ingrid Cyaimana, Team Leader, Poverty Cluster, UNDP Cambodia

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Mr. Subrato Sinha, Programme Specialist, UNEP/RRCAP

Ms. Saule Yessimova, UNEP-RRCAP

Ms. Gulmira Tolibaeva, UNEP-RRCAP

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

Mr. Wai Lin, Regional Coordinator, Asia Regional, Coordinating Unit, UNCCD

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)

Ms. Wendy Yap Hwee Min, Senior Officer, ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta, Indonesia

South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP)

Mr. Prasentha Dias, South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP), Colombo, Sri Lanka

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (Cont'd)

South Pacific Regional Environment (SPREP)

Mr. Matt McIntyre, Adviser and Programme Coordinator, Sustainable Economic Development, SPREP
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ICC Thailand Commission on Energy

Mr. Rene Okanovic, Chairman, ICC and Environment, Thailand Commission on Energy and
Environment, Thai-Scandic Steel Co., Ltd.

FARMERS

International Federation of Agriculture Producers (IFAP)

Mr. Raul Quimson Montemayor, Asian Regional Committee Chairman

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Hill Tracts NGO Forum & Trinamul

Mr. Mrinal Kanti Tripura, Coordinator

NGOs

Southeast Asia Regional Initiatives for Empowerment

Ms. Elenita C. Dano, Executive Director Community SEARICE

SCIENTIFIC & TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES

Scientific-Information Center of SIC ICWC

Mr. Pulatkhon D. Umarov, Deputy Director of SIC ICWC, Director of ICWC Training

World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO)

Prof. Chitr Lilavivat, WFEO Representative

TRADE UNIONS

Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP)

Mr. Arthur R. Barrit, Chief, Environmental Protection and Safety Office, Associated Labour Union

YOUTH

CSD Youth Caucus

Ms. Taposhi Biswas, Executive Member, National Federation of Youth Organisations in Bangladesh (NFYOB)

Global Youth Action Network

Ms. Catherine Kamping, Global Youth Action Network

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