

Chairman's Summary

ASEM Environment Ministers' Meeting

Lecce, Italy, 13 October , 2003

1. The second ASEM Environment Ministers' Meeting was held in Lecce, Italy on 13 October 2003 under the chairmanship of Mr. Altero Matteoli, Minister for the Environment and Territory of the Republic of Italy, also acting as President of the Environment Council of the European Union. Environment Ministers or their representatives from 10 Asian and 15 European countries attended the meeting, and the European Commissioner for Environment was also represented. UNEP Executive Director, Dr. Klaus Topfer, participated in the meeting as special invitee.

2. Ministers reiterated their appreciation to the People's Republic of China for the successful first ASEM Environment Ministers' meeting hosted in Beijing on 17 January 2002 and expressed their gratitude to Italy for the organisation of this second meeting.

3. Ministers discussed the follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), international environmental issues, in particular the synergies among multilateral environmental agreements, climate change and options for future dialogue on environmental matters within ASEM.

4. Ministers underlined the fact that ASEM partners are facing common challenges and that addressing global environmental problems requires strengthening international cooperation toward sustainable development. They also noted the increased convergence amongst ASEM members on environment and sustainable development. Ministers stressed that environmental protection, economic and social development policies must be integrated, and that preventive and up-stream approaches are more efficient and cost-effective than remedial action.

Follow up to World Summit on Sustainable Development.

5. Ministers stressed the importance to implement the outcomes of the WSSD and identified shared views on the follow up to WSSD. They explored prospects for dialogue, cooperation and partnerships in order to facilitate the achievement of the goals outlined in the Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, in the light of the multiyear program of work adopted by the UN Commission on Sustainable Development at its eleventh session (CSD11). They reaffirmed the importance of the thematic cluster chosen for the first cycle of the CSD - water, sanitation, and human settlements.

6. Ministers recognized that water is central to sustainable development. The scarcity and pollution of fresh water is a threat to economic development, to poverty reduction and social welfare, to food security, to health, to the environment and biodiversity, and to peace and security. Ministers recognized that urban and peri-urban areas have particular needs for water and sanitation that are distinct from rural areas and call for CSD12 and 13 to address these particular aspects in their activities.

7. Ministers recalled the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation goal to halve, by the year 2015,

the proportion of people who do not have access to safe drinking water or basic sanitation and to develop integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans by 2005. Ministers stressed the urgent need for intense focus on the 2005 target to develop integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans. These plans are fundamental for progress on the 2015 targets. They also recalled the water partnerships launched at the WSSD, such as the EU Water for Life Initiative and the “Portfolio of Water Actions” announced at the Ministerial Conference on the occasion of the 3rd World Water Forum held in March 2003 in Japan. Ministers welcomed the results from the 3rd World Water Forum and its Ministerial Conference and stressed the need to promote the sustainable use, protection, pollution prevention and management of water resources and the importance of integrated river basin management, including through international co-operation. They agreed to share best practices in delivery of water and sanitation services including the constructive participation of stakeholders and the establishment and operation of partnerships. Ministers also welcomed the recent action plan of the World Bank to mobilise more funds for infrastructure investments, in particular in the water sector in order to overcome the decline of World Bank funds and private funds for these investments in developing countries.

8. Ministers agreed that addressing water problems requires comprehensive and coordinated action at various levels, including effective governance, capacity building and mobilization and effective use of all financial resources.

9. Ministers emphasised the importance of women’s empowerment to actively contribute in water management as a prerequisite for sustainable development. They agreed to promote gender equality in their national integrated water resources management plans and sanitation programs.

10. Ministers recalled the target set in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Development Goal to achieve by 2020 a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers. They stressed that this requires a comprehensive policy response addressing priority cross-cutting issues such as sustainable urban transport, urban management, land use planning, construction and urban design.

11. Ministers stressed the importance of promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns and the development of a 10-year framework of programmes in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production and to promote social and economic development within the carrying capacity of ecosystems. They underlined the need to use in an integrated and coordinated manner and with the commitment and cooperation of all relevant actors a wide range of instruments addressing both the supply and demand side, such as integrated management systems, life cycle tools, integrated product policy and economic instruments, development and transfer of environmentally sound technologies, corporate environmental and social responsibility and accountability as well as indicators, education, consumer information, and empowerment of civil society. Ministers welcomed the results of the International Expert Meeting on the 10-Year Framework of Programmes for Sustainable Consumption and Production held in Marrakech, Morocco, on 16-19 June 2003, and the development of regional processes, such as the meetings held in

Argentina and Indonesia. The launching of the so-called “Marrakech Process” is an important step towards the development of a 10-year framework of programmes which needs to be further encouraged and promoted, inter alia, by an international expert meeting within 2 years. Ministers considered continuing regional cooperation and activities and cooperation with other regions as an important part of the Marrakech process and contributing to the Johannesburg follow up in achieving sustainable consumption and production. Ministers also welcomed that changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production will be addressed as a cross cutting issue by the UN Commission on Sustainable Development in every cycle of its multi year program of work, as decided in its eleventh session.

12. Ministers emphasised that achieving sustainable development requires decisive actions at all levels. They underlined the commitment in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation to start implementing national strategies for sustainable development by 2005, which could include poverty reduction strategies which integrate economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development.

13. On forest issues, Ministers stressed the importance of the implementation of sustainable forest management including afforestation/reforestation activities at national, regional and global levels, thus contributing, inter alia, to the conservation and sustainable use of forest biodiversity. In this regard, Ministers reconfirmed their commitment to implementing the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action and the expanded Program of Work on Forest Biological Diversity of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Ministers appreciated the efforts by ASEM partners to address sustainable management of forests, including combating illegal logging and related trade. Ministers took note of the recent Communication on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) issued by the European Commission. Ministers also underlined the importance of WSSD-partnerships and the implementation of pilot initiatives to improve sustainable forest management, including exploring opportunities that could evolve under the Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol.

14. Ministers stressed the importance of biodiversity and of protecting oceans and coastal areas, including through co-operation and partnerships on issues such as coral reefs. They called for increased awareness of the importance of the conservation of the sensitive coastal and marine resources and ecosystems such as mangroves and coral reefs, as well as prevention of unsound and illegal use of coastal and marine resources. They also called for increased awareness of environmental aspects of maritime safety to prevent pollution from maritime disasters during navigation or during load and unload vessels operations. They welcomed the adoption by a diplomatic conference held at the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) in May 2003 of a new protocol establishing an International Oil Pollution Compensation Supplementary Fund providing for a five-fold increase in the compensation currently available to victims, and called for early ratification of the protocol to allow it to enter into force as soon as possible. They noted the progress made in the discussions at 49th session of the IMO’s Marine Environment Protection Committee, on the further acceleration of the phase-out timetable for single-hull tankers, the application of the Condition Assessment Scheme to tankers of 15 years of age and above and the proposed ban on the carriage of heavy grades of oil in single-hull tankers. Ministers expressed their support for a successful completion of this process in December, with

a view to amending MARPOL 73/78. They also called for strengthened measures to enhance the responsibilities of flag States for the effective implementation and control of IMO instruments, including port state control. They welcomed the adoption by a diplomatic Conference held at Barcelona Convention of the New Emergency Protocol which introduced the concept of prevention and contingency plan concerning the oil and chemical spill from vessels as an example of how Regional Seas Conventions and Programme can help oceans and seas protection. With regard to the impact caused by ballast water upon the marine environment, it is important to cope with this issue through international cooperation, on the basis of the prospect that International Convention for the Control and Management of Ship's Ballast Water Sediments would be adopted in the near future.

15. Ministers stressed the crucial role of energy in sustainable development and underlined their commitment to cleaner, more sustainable and more efficient energy use. Ministers explored further options to increase the share of renewable energy. They took note of the Johannesburg Renewable Energy Coalition and of the partnerships promoted by other countries in the energy sector and welcomed the cooperation promoted by ASEM partners. They also welcomed the EU Initiative on Energy, which is focused on poverty eradication notably by improving access to sustainable and affordable energy services. They warmly welcomed the International Conference on Renewable Energies, which will be hosted by Germany in June 2004 and agreed to cooperate and make all efforts to make this very important event a success. Furthermore, they emphasised the importance of technology cooperation and transfer in the energy sector, in particular to developing countries, and the importance of the utilisation of the relevant provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the flexible mechanisms of the Kyoto Protocol, namely Emission Trading, Joint Implementation and Clean Development Mechanism, to ensure greenhouse gas emission reductions for combating climate change at a global level. Ministers also welcomed the initiative of the Netherlands to host a Conference on Energy for Development at the end of 2004 and recognised the valid results achieved at the Renewable Energy Conference held on 16-19 September 2003 in Sønderborg, Denmark.

16. Ministers also recalled that business, mass media, major groups and all the people of civil society are important forces in promoting sustainable development. They stressed the importance of promoting access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to judicial and administrative proceedings according to Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and agreed that exchanges of experience, dissemination of good practice and development of guidelines for public participation should be promoted. The Good Practice Document, a product of the ASEM environmental co-operation within the Asia-Europe Environmental Technology Centre, provides a good basis for further work on public participation, for example within the UN regional framework, in line with Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. Ministers welcomed the Asia-Europe Environment Forum launched in June 2003 by the Asia-Europe Foundation in partnership with UNEP, the Hans Seidel Foundation and the Institute for Global Environment Strategies as providing an opportunity for informal consultation among civil society stakeholders on the implementation of the WSSD outcomes.

Multilateral Environmental Agreements on Desertification, Biodiversity and on other environmental issues.

17. Ministers underlined the fact that cooperation activities that address compliance, synergies and interactions between Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) are needed. They stressed their commitment to implementing the guidelines on compliance with and enforcement of multilateral environmental agreements endorsed at the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its 7th special session on 15 February 2002 in Cartagena. Ministers also emphasised the importance of and their support for the development of effective compliance mechanisms in all Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

18. Ministers renewed their commitment, as made at the WSSD, to sound management of chemicals throughout their life cycle and of hazardous wastes for sustainable development as well as for the protection of human health and the environment, inter alia, aiming to achieve, by 2020, that chemicals are used and produced in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment, using transparent science-based risk assessment procedures and sciencebased risk management procedures, taking into account the precautionary approach as set out in principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. Ministers agreed to promote the ratification and implementation of relevant international instruments on chemicals and hazardous waste, including the Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent Procedures for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants so that they can enter into force at the latest in 2003 and 2004 respectively. Ministers also agreed to further promote the reduction of the risks posed by heavy metals that are harmful to human health and the environment.

19. Ministers expressed their commitment to the further development by 2005 of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and to promote action at all levels to reduce risks to human health and the environment from the release of mercury and its compounds, as agreed at the UNEP Governing Council in Nairobi in February 2003. As agreed at the WSSD, member countries are encouraged to implement the new globally harmonized system for the classification and labeling of chemicals as soon as possible, with a view to having the system fully operational by 2008. Ministers looked forward to further cooperation, including the Fourth Session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety and the First Preparatory Meeting for the further Development of a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management to be held in Bangkok in November 2003.

20. Ministers agreed that strengthening international governance in the field of environment is of primary importance. They emphasised that UNEP is playing an important catalyst role for international action in the field of environment and recognised that further work is going on with a view to strengthening the role and the financial situation of UNEP. They also noted that MEAs are important pillars of international environmental governance, and that UNEP should continue, in close cooperation with the Secretariats of the MEAs, to enhance synergies and linkages among MEAs and improve their effectiveness, where appropriate. Ministers looked forward to the 8th Special Session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of UNEP in Jeju, the Republic of Korea, in March 2004, with a view to taking further

steps towards strengthening international environmental governance.

21. Ministers emphasized that the continuing high rate of loss of biodiversity is a serious threat to sustainable development and to the environment. Ministers recalled that biological diversity and the ecosystem services it supports are essential for human existence and have a crucial role to play in sustainable development. They also recalled their WSSD commitment to significantly reducing the rate of loss of biological diversity by 2010. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its Biosafety Protocol provide the framework for international cooperation on this issue. Ministers stressed the need to strengthen implementation of the CBD and its work programmes and decisions through national, regional and global action programmes, in particular National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, and to strengthen their integration into relevant cross-sectoral strategies, programmes and policies.

22. Ministers welcomed the entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and stressed the importance of rapid ratification by as many countries as possible to secure broad participation and support of decisions at the first Meeting of the Parties in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in February 2004.

23. Ministers stressed the importance of their close cooperation in the run-up to the Conference of the Parties of the CBD (COP7) to take place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in February 2004. In view of the importance of achieving the 2010 target, COP7 should make a commitment to review progress towards the target at each Conference of the Parties. To help achieve this goal, and consistently with its agenda, COP 7 should adopt important decisions aiming at, inter alia, the implementation of the Strategic Plan, ensuring the establishment of well managed and representative protected areas based on scientific information, and the development of ecological networks; the adoption of a multi-year programme of work and the implementation of the Strategic Plan; the negotiation, within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity and bearing in mind the Bonn guidelines, of an international regime to promote and safeguard the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources; a new, targeted, work programme on mountain biological diversity; and should endeavour to promote technology transfer and cooperation, follow-up to WSSD.

24. Ministers underlined that global environment is, in its entirety, composed of complex and interrelated ecosystems, and they consider this vision crucial to better promote the synergies, co-operation and co-ordination among MEAs. More efforts are required to build stronger synergies between the Rio Conventions and their activities, such as the National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA) for climate change under the UNFCCC with the involvement of the UNCCD and UNCBD focal points. Synergies must be pursued at national, regional and international level.

25. Ministers call for the co-ordination and collaboration at national level among responsible institutions for the implementation of MEAs.

26. At the same time, Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Frameworks and equivalent macro-level planning processes should better take into account issues of sustainability, such as

topics agreed upon at the WSSD. National planning frameworks at the national level such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, equivalent macro-level planning processes and Agenda 21 provide opportunities to integrate issues of environmental sustainability in poverty reduction efforts.

27. Following the outcomes of the WSSD, ASEM Environment Ministers supported the development of methodologies for synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions and synergy-oriented projects to be implemented in developing countries and with their involvement. Ministers recognized that integrated projects with a focus on land use planning, and agricultural management, watershed management, soil and water conservation, drought preparedness and adaptation, renewable energy, sustainable forest management and afforestation/reforestation schemes could be one way forward to enable the Conventions to fully participate and benefit from the exchanges and findings.

Climate change.

28. Ministers reiterated that climate change is one of the most serious environmental challenges facing the world today. The UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol established an effective framework and rules for international cooperation in addressing climate change. Ministers underlined that it is important that all countries effectively participate in this framework and that the Kyoto Protocol provides an important step towards meeting this challenge. Ministers stressed the importance of the early entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol and hope that the Ninth Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP9) in Milan will contribute to this goal.

29. Ministers underlined the importance of tackling climate change and in this regard considered that implementing the Kyoto Protocol and its flexible mechanisms can contribute to the modernization of economies and societies, to economic benefits by fostering technological development, diffusion and transfer in the fields of mitigation and adaptation, greater resource efficiency, as well as new production processes and products. Ministers underlined that technology innovation and diffusion, e.g. in the field of renewable energies and energy efficiency, has a large potential to contribute to reaching the Kyoto targets. The Clean Development Mechanism has the potential to play an important role. The Ministers support the development of synergy-oriented projects under the Clean Development Mechanism. Ministers also agreed on the need to develop cooperation on mitigation and adaptation measures.

30. Ministers underlined the importance of strengthening domestic efforts to tackle climate change through appropriate measures and initiatives, the enhanced use of renewable energy as a share of total energy consumption, more efficient use of energy, energy conservation and use of alternative sources of energy. Ministers also underlined the need, as far as possible, of the synergy of climate change mitigation policies and other environmental policies including those on acidification and air quality: they can lead to significant health benefits, cost savings and improvements in air quality. Ministers agreed on the need to better integrate measure designed to halt climate change into all relevant sectoral policies including the field of energy and transport.

31. Ministers agreed on the need to look to the future and recalled that at the Fourth

Asia-Europe meeting, held in Denmark, 23-24 September 2002, Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their commitment to address climate change and stressed the need for further action within the framework of the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol.

32. Ministers stressed the importance of their close cooperation in view of COP9 which will take place in Milan, Italy, in December 2003 and called on all countries that have not yet done so to ratify the Kyoto Protocol.

Future dialogue on environmental matters within ASEM.

33. Ministers stressed that environmental co-operation among ASEM partners should be based on equality and full partnership. The co-operation underway between the two regions is important to address global and regional environmental and sustainable development issues. Environmental co-operation and environmentally sound technology transfer, which could promote environmentally friendly industry and the development of new industries inclusive of environmental considerations, will be an important asset for sustainable development. Ministers agreed to support partnerships conducive to investment and technology transfer, and to the diffusion of best practices in environmental management and promotion of environmentally sound technologies and products. Ministers acknowledged the potential of the private sector to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development and the need to promote corporate environmental and social responsibility and accountability.

34. Ministers recognised the significant role of ASEM focal points in promoting environmental cooperation among ASEM partners as well as facilitating rapid and effective exchange of information. Ministers, therefore, agreed to develop ways to strengthen the role of ASEM focal points

35. Ministers underlined the importance of education for environment and sustainable development and recommended a strengthening of the environmental component in ongoing educational exchange programmes, such as the ASEM-Duo Fellowship Programme and other initiatives, among ASEM partners.

36. Ministers emphasised that the experiences and outcome of the pilot phase of the Asia-Europe Environmental Technology Centre should be used to improve the cooperation in the field of environment within ASEM. Ministers reiterated their appreciation to the Kingdom of Thailand for hosting the pilot-phase of the Asia-Europe of the Environmental Technology Centre.

37. Ministers looked forward to continuing this dialogue, further exchanging views and developing common understanding to promote commitment to partnership and to strengthening future co-operation. Ministers agreed to enhance the consultation among ASEM partners prior and during international environmental negotiations, starting with UNFCCC COP9. Ministers also took note of the Italian initiative to host an "International Forum on Partnership for Sustainable Development" to be held in Rome in March 4-6, 2004 as a valuable opportunity for sharing experience and dialogue, including among ASEM partners.

38. Finally, Ministers agreed to hold the third ASEM Environment Ministers Meeting in Asia.

Ministers also agreed that the results of this Meeting in Lecce (October, 13th, 2003) would be presented at the 5th Asia-Europe Summit Meeting (ASEM5) in Hanoi, Vietnam, in October, 2004 and at the relevant international forums and conferences.