

Outcomes

Regional Implementation Meeting for Asia and the Pacific

31 November – 1 December 2009, UNCC, Bangkok,
Thailand

Introduction to AP RIM

- Held in Bangkok, Thailand 30 Nov – 1 Dec 2009
- Organized by ESCAP in partnership with UN DESA and UNEP, and with contributions from UNCRD and ADB
- Broad participation - ESCAP member states, Major Groups, UN bodies and international organizations, NGOs, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations
- Deliberations based on thematic reports prepared by ESCAP, UNEP, UNCRD and ADB along thematic clusters of the CSD-18/19 cycle

Transport – Progress & Constraints

- Regional connectivity improved with increased density & quality of roads, but more needed esp. for rural areas, smaller towns & landlocked areas
- For net-energy-importing countries volatile oil prices impact on energy security
- Air quality improved in some cities with better emission standards & regulations but still above WHO levels
- More use of rail & improved fuel efficiency, but CO₂ emissions still high & fast growing in developing countries
- Climate change adaptation major challenge with transport. infrastructure vulnerable to natural disasters

Transport – Policy Options

- Need integrated transport strategies, incl. land-use planning, intermodal systems, viable business models, behavioural changes & clean technologies
- Link development of transport systems to internat. efforts addressing climate change - focus on co-benefits
- Increase connectivity to serve needs of poor, but focus on sustainable systems, e.g. increase public transport
- Strengthen partnerships – public-private, with scientific communities & civil society
- Strengthen regional & internat. cooperation, such as Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks & the Asian Environ. Sustainable Transport Initiative

Chemicals – Progress & Constraints

- Overall safer management of chemicals on basis of internat. agreements, instruments & programmes thanks to improved regulation, policies & capacity development
- Implementation of existing internat. policy frameworks uneven & needs strengthening
- Initiatives taken to prevent illegal trafficking of chemicals & hazardous wastes, incl. ratification of multilateral environ. Agreements
- National capacity often behind rapidly growing level of consumption and no. of new chemicals

Chemicals – Policy Options

- Integrate chemical management into national development priorities & develop a sound institutional & programmatic national framework
- Promote ratification & implementation of relevant existing international conventions, incl. recognizing international standards, tools and approaches for environment & health & protection from chemicals
- Promote participation of private sector & civil society in chemical management
- Strengthen technical assistance & train local personnel
- Cooperation of nat. gov & multilateral agencies in preparing laws & regulations, research facilities & databases

Waste Management – Progress & Constraints

- Waste generation in AP rising rapidly due to econ. Growth, urbanization & industrialization
- 3R (reduction, reuse, recycling) Knowledge Hub created to exchange information & strengthen capacities of developing countries
- Gov. started ecological SWM through legislation on environ. sound management of wastes & waste water; incorporating 3Rs; & including private sector & communities in SWM
- Implementation & enforcement of laws & regulations challenging. Local & nat. Gov. lack financial resources, suitable technology & land for disposing wastes, & face increasing transport. costs

Waste Management – Policy Options

- Need greater regional cooperation in information exchange & formulating national waste management strategies
- Focus on innovative approaches & technologies in municipal solid wastes, including waste-to-energy and composting approaches
- Improve biomedical and nuclear waste management
- Develop guidelines under Conference of the Parties to Basel Convention
- Exchange regulatory information on hazardous waste via Asian Network for Prevention of Illegal Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes

Mining – Progress & Constraints

- Demand for minerals increased, incl. for rare elements for clean technologies, but development opportunities not fully realized & resources undervalued
- Regional frameworks supporting new mining policies established by ASEAN & APEC, Gov. promote responsible mining, extract. industry working towards better practices
- Still, large-scale mining destroys natural resources & ecosystems & problematic for health & welfare of local, often indigenous, communities & benefits not shared equitably
- Lack of implementation capacities reducing effectiveness of regulatory frameworks & incentives

Mining – Policy Options

- Enhance regional cooperation & consider internat. convention on mineral trade & investment policy
- Promote inclusive, transparent & ethical investment processes & operations
- Increase capacity in developing countries to conduct environ. impact assessments
- Strengthen demand management through life-cycle assessments & industrial ecology approaches
- Strengthen land use management practices in relation to mining, especially in catchment areas & forest reserves

SCP – Progress & Constraints

- National Initiatives - circular economy (China), 3R (Japan), Sufficiency Economy (Thailand), Low-carbon Green Growth Strategy (ROK), GNH (Bhutan);
- A myriad of regional initiatives - Asia-Pacific SCP Roundtable, Regional SCP Helpdesk, Green Growth (ESCAP), Green Industry (UNIDO), Green Economy (UNEP), Green Jobs (ILO);
- Despite A/P high poverty levels, consumption measured by ecological footprint already unsustainable
- Policy, financial and institutional constraints;
- Insufficient capacity to develop relevant policies
- Insufficient demand for sustainable products & services;

SCP – Policy Options

- Develop effective national policies – green/sustainable public procurement, information disclosure, eco-labelling, carbon labelling, etc
- Set clear sustainability targets with indicators (e.g. resource use intensity, emissions, green products etc.)
- Promote investments in innovation, R&D, EST development
- Public awareness and information dissemination
- Internalization of externalities
- A number of prioritized programmes are also listed in Annex III of RIM report

X-cutting Issues & Conclusions (1)

- Ecological & social imbalances of current economic growth patterns not isolated but closely interlinked.
- Need holistic approaches to increase resilience of socio-economic systems
- Focus on environmentally sustainable & socially inclusive policies & actions
- Decouple economic growth from environmental degradation
- Need to internalize social & environmental costs to influence private & public choices

X-cutting Issues & Conclusions (2)

- Need to strengthen market-based instruments
- Poverty – principal & persistent challenge – costs related to labour protection, providing housing & social security should also be internalised
- Strengthen regional forums cross cutting issues – e.g. capacity development, technology transfer, financial resources & information gaps