

FINAL
Chairperson's Summary
The 7th Annual Water Environment Partnership in Asia Meeting
Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Makati, Manila, the Philippines
23 September 2011

1. The Seventh Annual Meeting of the Water Environment Partnership in Asia (WEPA) was organised on 23 September 2011 at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel, Manila, the Philippines. The Ministry of the Environment, Japan co-organised the meeting with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) - River Basin Control Office and the Environmental Management Bureau. Thirty six participants attended, including representatives from 13 Water Environment Partnership in Asia (WEPA) partner countries (*Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Viet Nam, and Japan*).
2. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Mitsumasa Okada, Professor of the Open University of Japan and the WEPA Advisor. There were three main agenda items for the meeting: 1) Framework analysis of water environmental management status in WEPA partner countries, 2) WEPA Outlook and WEPA message, and 3) Plan of Activities for the 2nd APWS and for FY 2012.
3. At the beginning of the annual meeting, Mr. Nobuo Yoshida, Director of the Water Environment Division, Environmental Management Bureau, Ministry of the Environment of Japan delivered the opening remarks. Mr. Yoshida expressed sincere gratitude and appreciation for the active participation through extensive discussion during the two day international workshop. The workshop satisfied the meeting objective which was to enhance the knowledge of WEPA partners through sharing experiences on water policy to attain water quality targets, and improve water quality management in the context of river basin and domestic wastewater treatment facility installation to address water pollution issues.
4. Mr. Takatoshi Wako, Deputy Director of the Water Environment Division of the Ministry of the Environment, Japan explained the main agenda of the meeting. He explained that one of the expected outcomes is to generate basic agreement on the framework analysis approach and also identify common management issues to further promote WEPA discussion and mutual learning. He proposed to diversify WEPA's knowledge sharing scheme to make it more solution-oriented. Twinning projects and meetings among the countries which have similar problems was suggested as an example of the new scheme of knowledge sharing.

Agenda 1. Water Environmental Management Status in WEPA countries

5. Ms. Yatsuka Kataoka, Director of the Freshwater Sub-group of the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), serving as the WEPA Secretariat, explained the outline of the framework analysis to assess the status of water environmental management of each partner country as an entry point for identification of intensive partnership programmes in

terms of experience and data sharing. The draft framework was presented to WEPA partners for comments specifically in four stages, namely planning, implementation (doing), monitoring (*to check progress periodically*) and action. She also presented the examples of the framework analysis for each country based on the results of the questionnaire which the WEPA Secretariat collected from partner countries. For those that did not reply to the questionnaire, the information contained in the WEPA database was the basis for the analysis. Additional criteria can be incorporated into the draft framework analysis based on the discussion of the annual meeting.

6. The participating countries expressed their views and comments on the draft framework analysis. The attempt to analyse water environmental management status is welcomed in general, but some WEPA countries need more time for review to agree the contents of the analysis. Main points of comments raised from each participating country during the discussions were summarised in annex 1. Some of the key comments are as follows:
 - The framework should be considered as a general framework to see commonalities and differences.
 - Since the situation of the water environment and water environmental management differs from region to region, analysis should be conducted on a regional basis. For example, different frameworks should be applied for urban and rural settings. Analysis at basin level is also worth considering.
 - For some elements in the framework analysis, it is difficult to get information – such as information on human resources.
 - Elements to be included in the framework analysis should be considered by each country for improvement.
 - There was a suggestion to rank countries based on the proposed analysis, but the framework is not designed for ranking and therefore it is not appropriate to use for that purpose.
 - It is suggested that it would be useful to quantify accomplishments to determine how much has been achieved based on the established framework analysis.
7. The conference chairperson acknowledged all the suggestions, and promised that the secretariat will integrate the comments upon evaluation and further study. The framework analysis is a working document for further consideration. Additional comments from partner countries are welcomed to brush up the framework analysis.

Agenda 2. WEPA Outlook and WEPA Messages

8. Ms. Yatsuka Kataoka, the WEPA Secretariat, explained the outline of the WEPA Outlook on Water Environmental Management Strategies, 2nd version. The outlook will be launched during the February 2012 Asia Pacific Water Summit in Bangkok, Thailand, and will also be distributed in March 2012 at the 6th World Water Forum in Marseille, France. Participants discussed the contents of the outlook, key messages to be attached to the outlook and production schedule.
9. The proposed structure of the outlook was agreed by participants. The secretariat asked for further assistance from partner countries in providing information to update the country

profiles and other thematic chapters to incorporate all necessary information in the outlook. A participant suggested that best practices should be included, which would be useful information to improve the water environmental management.

10. For the WEPA message, there were some comments as follows. Participants are requested to provide further comments on the message.
 - The whole ecosystem should also be considered, not only water quality.
 - Include the development sector as a threat in terms of water environmental destruction.
 - In the key message please highlight challenges and experiences in water environment management.
 - It is better to define the “sound water environment” mentioned in the draft message.
 - It is suggested the following elements should be included in the key areas in water environmental management.
 - The importance of technology transfer, since it is key to improving the water environment of new developing countries
 - The importance of strengthening enforcement in addition to strengthening laws and regulations
 - Stress the employment of market-based instruments as an incentive system, and the “polluter pays” principle
 - The importance of on-site domestic wastewater treatment should be mentioned more explicitly.

11. The chairperson requested the WEPA Secretariat to consider the comments raised by the partner countries in elaboration of the draft outlook and WEPA messages. He also requested all partner countries to assist in the production of the outlook according to the schedule suggested by the WEPA Secretariat. In addition, there was a statement from the partner from the Philippines that the focal points of all partner countries should check the draft outlook carefully since the publication could come to the attention of policy makers of each country who will attend the Asia-Pacific Water Summit. The schedule suggested by the WEPA Secretariat is described as follows.
 - 15 October 2011 – WEPA message (additional comments), comments and further information for the country profiles
 - First Week of November – Send thematic drafts
 - 15 November 2011 – Complete draft of all country profiles
 - End of November 2011 – Send draft of Executive Summary. Finalization of country profiles
 - 15 December 2011 –Review by WEPA advisors
 - End of December 2011 – Finalization (editing for printing)
 - January – February 2012 – Editing and printing (for distribution at the 2nd APWS)

Agenda 3. Plan of Activities at the 2nd Asia Pacific Water Summit in FY 2012

12. The WEPA Secretariat introduced the plan of activities for the 2nd Asia-Pacific Water Summit to be held during February in Thailand, such as organisation of a technical session on WEPA scheduled on 3 February 2012. The plan of activities for the 6th World Water Forum to be held during March in France was also introduced. The secretariat will continue to communicate with partner countries and shall accept constructive comments and suggestions regarding the WEPA partners' participation.
13. The secretariat also explained that knowledge sharing for solutions should be further promoted under WEPA through a new scheme such as twinning project and issue-based group meetings. The secretariat would like to hear the issues about which WEPA countries would like to share knowledge via WEPA through needs-matching practices. The secretariat asked WEPA countries to provide further comments on the needs-matching matrix that the WEPA Secretariat will prepare for further discussion.
14. In conclusion, the chairperson expressed appreciation for the partner countries' active participation in the discussion. He is expecting their continuous cooperation in the submission of their WEPA Outlook comments per their agreement as scheduled.

ANNEX: Comments on the Framework Analysis (Agenda 1)

Philippines:

The overall content of the framework analysis is acceptable to all. The point of discussion may be considered as a cycle which will start at the conceptualisation and planning stage and identify gaps for decision making. Each participant country must look at the framework as a general framework (*focusing on commonality among countries*) but they may vary on how to implement policies and identify remedial strategy/define work programmes considering the economic objectives. Thirteen WEPA countries may still need further discussion on the harmonisation of existing regulations involving some parameters, then they will make possible resolutions. There is a need to check the system to provide more detailed information, to understand more. But it will serve as a good entry point for the WEPA countries.

China:

There is difficulty in the implementation of the framework analysis because it has both structural and non-structural issues, particularly data on human resources and ambient quality. Also in China, urban settings and rural settings are very different, and therefore it is better to consider different frameworks for each.

Indonesia:

It is confusing to know how to implement the projects/activities as specified by the framework analysis since the barriers to implementation are budget constraints. However, the framework is a good entry point and a good implementation strategy. It is necessary to have a discussion with the supervisor and therefore immediate approval cannot be made.

Cambodia:

The framework analysis can be supported in principle. But they need more time to review and analyse the results of the country's situation. More consideration and review are necessary before such analytical results are open to the public through the WEPA website and the outlook.

Japan:

The general criteria must be discussed and evaluated for further improvement. A comparison with other countries' experiences is important.

Korea:

The framework is acceptable but they also have problems with funding. They still have to provide some additional information.

Laos:

There is a need for more time to analyse the framework. Considering the situation of Laos where the situation is changing a lot recently, it is difficult to explain some criteria.

Malaysia : The framework analysis is basically acceptable but it is necessary to have more clear definition of terms like: human resources and/or staff qualification, water quality and each parameter. Also it is recommended to apply the framework analysis at the basin level, not at national level.

Myanmar:

More time is necessary to review and validate their country profile data.

Nepal:

It is necessary to consult their policy and planning staff regarding the results of analysis on Nepal, because it is a delicate matter putting information into the website without validating data information.

Sri Lanka:

The framework analysis is generally approved, but there is still room for improvement, such as implementation plans and law enforcement strategies, which are key for improvement of water environmental management.

Thailand:

- Not only law enforcement is important, but recreation or ecotourism must also be considered
- An economic instrument (incentives) must be developed for the water quality management
- Installation of wastewater treatment facilities is important for all WEPA countries
- An institutional arrangement in the form of a committee created for each water agency is necessary
- Human resources or capacity building of staff must be included in the plan
- A coalition of agencies regarding water quality and quantity is needed

Viet Nam:

The idea of the framework analysis is basically agreeable and it is a good entry point in evaluating the water environment quality management of each country. A more important issue is what comes next after the framework analysis.