

**Chairperson's Summary**  
**The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Water Environment Partnership in Asia Meeting**  
Apsara Ankor Hotel, Siem Reap, Cambodia  
19 February, 2013

1. The Eighth Annual Meeting of the Water Environment Partnership in Asia (WEPA) was organised on 19 February 2012 at the Apsara Ankor Hotel, Siem Reap, Cambodia. The Ministry of the Environment, Japan co-organised the meeting with the Ministry of Environment of Royal Government of Cambodia. Thirty five participants attended, including representatives from 12 Water Environment Partnership in Asia (WEPA) partner countries (*Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, 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. The meeting had three main agenda items: 1) Report of activities in 2012, 2) Activities in 2012: Industrial wastewater management, and 3) Activities in 2013 and beyond. The chairperson strongly encouraged the participants for their active participation and proactive comments.
3. At the beginning of the annual meeting, Mr. Tadashi Kitamura, Director of the Water Environment Division, Environmental Management Bureau, Ministry of the Environment of Japan delivered the opening remarks. Mr. Kitamura expressed sincere gratitude and appreciation for the active participation through extensive discussion during one and a half days international workshop. The workshop satisfied the meeting objective which was to share and discuss the progress and plans of activities of WEPA in the near future.

**Agenda 1. Report of Activities 2011-2012**

4. Ms. Yatsuka Kataoka, Director of the Freshwater Sub-group of the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), which also serve as the WEPA Secretariat, explained the WEPA activities in 2012. Based on the objectives of WEPA to share information and together build capacity among the participants, she has outlined the main activities of forum and workshops including the session at the 6<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum, WEPA studies including the topics on climate change, domestic wastewater management, industrial wastewater management and framework analysis of water governance. She has also introduced the publication of *WEPA Outlook on Water Environmental Management 2012*.
5. Dr. R.M.S.K. Ratnayake, Director of Environmental Pollution Control Department, Central Environmental Agency of Sri Lanka presented the reflection of the WEPA dialogue in Sri Lanka which was held in Colombo in August 2012. He explained that the objectives of the dialogue to share experience on domestic and industrial wastewater management in Sri Lanka and Japan by reflecting the information on constraints and opportunities, and to discuss how the water environment management of Sri Lanka could be improved by incorporating policies, strategies and practices of WEPA partner countries were fruitfully met. He has then shared the suggestion for WEPA to add more

weight on industrial wastewater management and conduct discussion on new policy initiatives in its future activities.

## **Agenda 2. Activity in 2012: Industrial Wastewater Management**

6. In 2012, WEPA Secretariat conducted a survey on industrial wastewater management system in selected countries under the WEPA discussion topic “water environmental governance”. Under this agenda, efforts to improve compliance of industrial wastewater regulations by Malaysia and Viet Nam were presented in addition to the report of the survey conducted by the WEPA Secretariat.
7. Mr. Ismail Ithnin, Director of Enforcement Division, Department of Environment, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment gave a presentation on Malaysia’s requirement on industrial effluents treatment systems. Mr. Ithnin gave detail explanations on their regulation requirements and engineering designs of the system. He further elaborated on how proactive and preventive monitoring of the system is conducted, followed by the explanation on contravention license which is based on the concept of polluted pay principle. To the questions from the floor on the site selection procedure and provision of total maximum daily load (TMDL), Mr. Ithnin has responded that sites are selected based on case by case basis particularly EIA related project and specific location of the industry based on river carrying capacity.
8. Dr. Do Nam Thang, Deputy Director of Institute of Science for Environmental Management, Vietnam Environmental Administration, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment gave a presentation on recent development in industrial wastewater management in Vietnam. Dr. Do Nam Thang gave overview of water pollution and the situation of industrial wastewater management in Vietnam. He then gave detailed explanation on environmental policies in the country with an evaluation of their compliance, which is being low with the figure 64%. In order to address this situation, Dr. Do Nam Thang explained that Vietnam is revising the current Law on Environmental Protection. With the revised law, it is expected that responsibilities among line ministries will become clearer and also pollution prevention tool such as EIA and economic instruments will be strengthened. The revision is expected to be finalized by the end of 2013.
9. To facilitate the discussion on challenges of industrial wastewater management, to share good practices, and to consider possible activities under WEPA on the topic, Ms. Yatsuka Kataoka, the WEPA Secretariat, gave presentation on industrial wastewater management systems in selected WEPA partner countries. Ms. Kataoka explained the survey result which has indentified six challenges including regulations, registration/approval process, monitoring and reporting by industries, inspection and provision of guidance, organizational issues and awareness that are faced by the selected WEPA countries. Based on these results, she has presented the possible options for WEPA’s future activities on the topic of industrial wastewater management for the subsequent discussion among the WEPA partner countries. It was added that selection criteria of activities will be the topic for discussion, but “urgency” “timeliness” and “proactive engagement of WEPA partner(s)” will be critical.
10. The presentations were followed by discussion among the WEPA partners on enabling factors for the proper implementation of regulations on industrial effluents, especially on

lessons and future challenges. The issue of regulations for Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs) was raised from the Philippines with the background that many of the pollution sources are still with the SMEs. Current regulation system on industrial wastewater has larger scale industries in mind and do not reflect the reality of SMEs. It was also pointed out from China on how to cope with sometimes too strict standards which do not necessarily reflect the reality. It was responded by the chairperson that in the process of deciding new effluent standard, all stakeholders including government, engineers, university professors, business representative come together to discuss from practical point of view. Thus standards change according to location and category of industry. The process is time and human resource consuming, but are the necessary steps to reflect the reality. It was then followed by the discussion on how to encourage participation of various stakeholders which is still a major challenge in many of the WEPA countries. It was concluded that the secretariat will continue to communicate with partner countries and shall accept further comments and suggestions.

### **Agenda 3. Activities in 2013 and beyond**

11. Reaffirming the objective of WEPA to improve water environmental governance and improve capacity of governmental officers through the exchange of knowledge among partner countries, a plan of activities of the final year of WEPA Second phase (2013) and beyond was explained by Ms. Yatsuka Kataoka of the WEPA Secretariat. The activities included outreach and discussion, pilot activities, publication of reports and policy briefs and annual meeting.
12. It was followed by the explanation on roadmap for the Third phase by Mr. Takatoshi Wako of Ministry of the Environment of Japan. Mr. Wako explained that because of the internal process of Japan, it is necessary for WEPA to conduct preparation for the Third Phase to go in parallel with the activity in 2013. Communication with each country would thus become very important until May 2013.
13. Mr. Wako then outlined points to be considered for the WEPA 3rd Phase activities. One is to bear in mind a solution type approach and a framework called water environmental management status and its improvement plan (WEMSIP). Each partner country will develop WEMSIP which demonstrate the state of water environment and its management problems so that limited WEPA resources could be used to seek for more appropriate solutions. The second aspect is to reflect the international trend to locate water quality/wastewater treatment as one of the focus of the post-2015 international development goals on water. It was suggested that WEPA will try to send out its voice to the discussion on goal setting to “mainstream” water environment management. .
14. The WEPA Secretariat conducted the questionnaire survey on the review of the WEPA second phase and the comments for the third phase before the Annual Meeting. Before the chair opened the floor for discussion, Ms. Yatsuka Kataoka summarised the result of the questionnaire.
15. The chairperson then asked the participants from each country for their opinion in reverse alphabetical order. Following are the feedback and suggestions from each country:

Vietnam affirmed the importance of WEPA and showed the expectation of its continuation beyond 2014 (the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase). Interest in community participation on wastewater management was articulated as a priority area of the country in water environmental management.

Thailand stated that focus on industrial wastewater management is appropriate and useful. The country has two regulatory agencies look over industrial effluent quality, which need improvement. The problem also identified is regulations cared less about load aspect. It has expressed expectations for WEPA to share information on provisions on loading issues.

Sri Lanka expressed its interest in industrial wastewater treatment for SMEs together with technological transfer. It is also suggested that WEPA create vision or outcome statement to promote its activities.

The Philippines expressed interest in three aspects: 1) broaden perspective and share knowledge on policy, master plan, and programs on wastewater treatment implementation, 2) pilot program to focus on specific issue to find specific solution on local level, and 3) climate change and its impact on water including water quantity.

Malaysia gave expectation in four areas: 1) pilot project on joint billing between water and wastewater/sewerage, 2) experience shared from other countries (south-south cooperation) such as master plan and policy development for wastewater management, 3) capacity building, and 4) pilot project for and group workshop on specific topic on SMEs such as textile and food industries. It is also suggested the nexus between energy, water and food security to be included as a topic for next WEPA workshop.

Myanmar stressed the importance to look at SMEs as well as law development and enforcement, public awareness, and capacity development.

Laos expressed that WEPA network has been useful for the country as a learning opportunity from other countries' experiences on water environmental management. They also agreed in general to the suggestion made by the WEPA secretariat and expressed its interest in decentralization of responsibility to the local government on wastewater and waste management and welcomed the exchange of knowledge among the WEPA countries.

Korea offered to share experience of its Four River restoration project among the WEPA countries. It has also suggested that 1) list of WEPA focal point to be on WEPA website, and 2) there is a need to consider ways to obtain the latest information of water management status and technologies of each country through the WEPA website.

Indonesia expressed the need to have a focus on SMEs and how to build awareness among stakeholders. Good practices and communication skills are considered important and showed interest in learning from the WEPA countries.

China expressed interest in drinking water security and monitoring system, and that information from the WEPA countries would be helpful.

Cambodia valued the WEPA database and it has also showed its interest on capacity building on domestic wastewater treatment at sub-national level, and on industrial wastewater treatment. It was stressed that the issue on climate change should also be covered in the third phase.

16. Dr. Motoyuki Suzuki, Auditor of Tokyo Institute of Technology and the WEPA Special Advisor referred to the negative legacy of the past pollution problems in Japan such as four major pollution diseases and suggested that all countries have to tackle water environmental issues though there are various problems exist.
17. The chairperson asked the secretariat to further communicate with the partner countries to elaborate on more solid action plans and concluded the meeting by expressing appreciation for the partner countries' active participation in the discussion. He has reiterated the WEPA country's support being important for the implementation of the WEPA activities in 2013, Third Phase and beyond.