

The 5th Annual Meeting of Water Environment Partnership in Asia (WEPA)

Chairperson's Summary

1. The Fifth Annual Meeting of Water Environmental partnership in Asia (WEPA) was held on 10 March 2010 in Hanoi Horizon Hotel, Viet Nam. The Annual Meeting was chaired by Dr. Mitsumasa Okada, the chair of the WEPA Advisory Committee. There were 29 participants who attended the annual meeting, including 21 participants from 11 WEPA partner countries and 3 WEPA advisors. The meeting also had participation from Sri Lanka, one of the new WEPA partner candidate countries. The list of participants is attached to this summary as Attachment 1. Participants shared the goal of and exchanged their views on WEPA activities in the second phase. The main points of the annual meeting are summarised as below.

2. Sharing goals of the second phase of WEPA
Mr. Shu Nishi, Deputy Director, Water Environmental Management Division, Environmental Management Bureau, Ministry of the Environment, Japan presented the goals and overall picture of WEPA Second phase based on Doc. 1 “Water Environment Partnership in Asia (WEPA) Outline of Activities of the Second Phase” (Attachment 2 of this summary). As for the annual meeting, it is suggested that the annual meeting should have more discussion since it is a good opportunity for face-to-face communication.

The participants endorsed the WEPA outline of activities of the second phase. The main features of the second phase of activities are summarized below.

- (1) Overall goal of WEPA continues to be “strengthening water environmental governance” in each WEPA partner country. By strengthening water environmental governance, it is expected that efficiency and effectiveness of water environmental policy planning and implementation will be enhanced.
- (2) To achieve the goal of WEPA, the second phase of WEPA (April 2009 – March 2012) has specific objectives, namely (a) identification of areas need policy intervention through extended analysis of water environment governance, (b) sharing of knowledge and finding of options for solution of common and emerging issues on water environment through discussion; (c) delivery of message from WEPA, and (d) enhancement of knowledge and capacity of partners through WEPA activities.

- (3) Policy reports, messages from WEPA, updated WEPA database are the examples of the expected outputs of the second phase. Enhancement of knowledge and capacity of partners through WEPA activities is an expected outcome of the second phase.
- (4) The focal point person should be appointed by each partner country, and he or she is expected to carry out functions for achieving the objective of WEPA through regular communications and commitments regarding WEPA activities.
- (5) The number of WEPA partner countries can be increased with the endorsement of existing partner countries.
- (6) The Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) continues to be the Secretariat of WEPA. .

3. Work Program April 2010 – March 2014

The work program of WEPA Second phase for each specific goal was explained by Ms. Yatsuka Kataoka, Manager of the Freshwater Project. The main points of the discussion on this topic are summarized as below.

(1) Senior Official's Meeting

- ✓ In general, the idea of organizing a senior officials meeting was welcomed by participants. In current plan of activities, the senior officials meeting is to be held in FY2011 (April 2011 – March 2012) and before the Sixth World Water Forum in March 2012.
- ✓ The meeting of high-level officials would bring better recognition and an increase of impacts of WEPA activities in each partner country, which help the work of the focal point persons.
- ✓ There was a proposal that participation at vice minister level might be appropriate for the proposed meeting.
- ✓ The general purpose of the senior officials meeting should be information sharing and discussion on important topics of WEPA for future actions. The topic of the meeting is very important and needs to be decided carefully.
- ✓ The WEPA Secretariat is requested to elaborate the concepts of the senior officials meeting including objective, topics and expected outputs in close consultation of focal point of each partner country.

(2) Update of WEPA database

An update of the WEPA database contents was raised as one of the urgent actions that WEPA should take. The WEPA Secretariat has been trying to update the information by such means as regular check of web-site of partner organisations, country reports prepared by JICA-WEPA training course, but there are limitations to how much

information of each WEPA country can be gained through such means. It is requested that WEPA partner country should provide update information for the WEPA database when there has been any new development.

(3) Earlier notice of discussion topics of WEPA meetings

To prepare presentations with good quality for WEPA meetings such as workshops, it is desirable to know the discussion topics of WEPA meeting much earlier. It is requested that the WEPA Secretariat should provide meeting topics for the Japanese fiscal year 2010 (April 2010 – March 2011) at an earlier stage of the fiscal year, in consultation with the Ministry of the Environment, Japan and WEPA partner countries when necessary.

(4) Outreach activities

- ◆ Considering the member countries of WEPA, it is necessary to collaborate with ASEAN+3 countries which work on the water environmental governance issues.

- ◆ It is good that the current plan of activities extends WEPA outreach activities not only to water but also to non-water policy process such as the Conference of Parties (COP) of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In addition, it is also very useful for WEPA to provide inputs to key organisations in each WEPA country on related topics.

(5) Inclusion of “activities” in each WEPA country

WEPA or Ministry of the Environment of Japan should consider implementation of “activities” in each country and share information and knowledge to be accumulated in actual projects with specific suggestions. Information gained through such activities can reflect the difference in the level of development and water environmental problems of each WEPA country and therefore make more effective knowledge sharing possible.

4. Main Points of the 1st WEPA International Workshop – Thematic Session 1

The main points of the thematic session 1 on urbanization and water quality control for the source of water in Asian city were introduced by Mr. Tetsuo Kuyama, Researcher, IGES. Salient points on the session were summarized as follows.

- ◆ Rapid urbanization and population increase brought urban wastewater problems in all WEPA countries, although problems differ from city to city.
- ◆ In addition to the technical solution, enforcement of wastewater management policy and management tools such as laws and standards is also the issue that WEPA should address.
- ◆ Urban wastewater management should be addressed together with urban development or planning. For example, wastewater from illegal residence near river/water reservoir

cannot be solved solely by wastewater management policies.

5. Main points of the 1st WEPA International Workshop – Thematic Session 2

Ms. Yatsuka Kataoka, IGES summarized the thematic session on climate change impacts to the water environment and adaptation options, with special focus on small group discussion to identify potential impacts and adaptation options. The list of potential impacts and adaptation options identified through the discussion was summarized in Table 1. As the common issues for future discussion on this topics, the following points were presented: (1) identification of observed impacts of climate change on water environment (what has changed?), (2) estimation of impacts of climate change on water environment (what will change?), and (3) identification of necessary adaptation options and potential outcomes.

In relation to the theme of the session, the following comments were raised by the WEPA partner countries.

- ♦ Climate change issues are the topics that other governmental organization(s) is responsible for, and therefore it is difficult to address the issue. (RPC)
- ♦ It is important to share the information and knowledge on the theme which are not properly addressed. (RPK)
- ♦ Capacity development is most important for this theme. It is good for WEPA or Ministry of the Environment, Japan to explore more support for capacity development on climate change and water, especially on technical issues. (Cambodia)
- ♦ It is necessary to combine climate change issues with other water environmental problems such as urban wastewater management. (Cambodia)
- ♦ The scope of discussion under WEPA on this topic should be narrowed down to “water environmental issues and climate change”. (Cambodia)
- ♦ Wastewater management and climate change related knowledge should be addressed from the viewpoint of co-benefit approach under WEPA. Such knowledge is useful and also will facilitate coordination and network with other ministries related to the issue at country level. (Thailand)
- ♦ Intensified drought is one of the biggest issues on this theme. This issue should be addressed by demand-side management and therefore water conservation should be included in the discussion scope (Malaysia)
- ♦ Adaptation options for the water environment are also important for forest conservation and water ecosystem. (Lao PDR)
- ♦ Case study of different countries on this theme would be useful to share the knowledge among partners (Viet Nam).

- ♦ In addition to the JICA training, it is desirable that WEPA conduct pilot studies or provide policy advice to each country as its capacity development activities. (Viet Nam).

6. New Partner Countries

To extend knowledge sharing by a larger number of partner countries, an increase of partner countries is considered by the WEPA secretariat with due consideration to the effectiveness of project activities and budget size. In the annual meeting, the participation of Nepal and Sri Lanka in WEPA as new partner countries was proposed by the chairperson and endorsed by all partner countries attended.

7. Other matters

The Secretariat asked partner countries to provide their suggestions, proposals and further comments on WEPA activities. The suggestions/proposals/comments provided by partner countries will be considered in planning and implementation of future WEPA activities in due consideration of financial and human resources available.

Finalized on 31 March 2010