



*Ministry of Natural Resources
and Environment*



Association of Southeast Asian Nations



*Ministry of Agriculture
and Rural Development*



*United Nations
Development Programme*

CONFERENCE ON PROMOTING PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ASEAN AGREEMENT ON TRANSBOUNDARY HAZE POLLUTION

11-13 May 2006, Hanoi, Vietnam



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FINAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Background

Over the past two decades, fires and haze in the ASEAN region have been influenced by rapid demographic changes, increased human activities, and climatological factors. Droughts combined with indiscriminate use of fire for developmental and agricultural activities have impacted severely on the society, economic activities and the environment. In view of the urgency and complexity of the issue, the ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment-Haze Technical Task Force, established in September 1995, undertook concerted efforts and developed a response strategy known as the Regional Haze Action Plan (RHAP). The RHAP, which provides a framework for strengthening the region's capacity to address transboundary haze pollution, was endorsed by the ASEAN Environment Ministers in December 1997. Since then, activities and programmes as prescribed in the RHAP have been progressively implemented.

Regional cooperation was further strengthened through the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution. The governments of the ten ASEAN Member Countries signed the Agreement on 10 June 2002 during the World Conference and Exhibition on Land and Forest Fire Hazards held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Agreement contains provisions on monitoring, assessment and prevention, technical cooperation and scientific research, mechanisms for coordination, lines of communication, and simplified customs and immigration procedures

for disaster relief. The Agreement also provides for the establishment of an ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Transboundary Haze Pollution Control. The Agreement entered into force on 25 November 2003.

Land and forest fires and the resulting transboundary haze pollution is obviously a problem too large for any one country or agency to manage alone. Its impact on global climate change and loss of biological diversity requires concrete collective action by ASEAN and its Member Countries, the global community, donor agencies, international organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), researchers/ scientists, private sector as well as local communities. It needs considerable resources particularly in terms of financial and technical inputs. In this respect, while ASEAN Member Countries have taken the lead in addressing this problem by undertaking various strategic measures and on-the-ground activities at the regional and national levels, support from all relevant stakeholders will help to speedily alleviate this problem.

The Conference aims to disseminate and promote better understanding of key aspects of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution; provide an opportunity for ASEAN to share the progress and articulate further needs for effective implementation of the Agreement; promote and strengthen partnership with relevant regional and international organisations and donor communities to support the implementation of the Agreement; and explore areas of cooperation and partnership to meet future challenges of land and forest fire issues and transboundary haze pollution.

Conference on Promoting Partnerships for the Implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution



Objective

The Conference seeks to promote and strengthen partnerships between ASEAN Member Countries and relevant regional and international organisations, donor communities and other partners/ supporters for the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution. Particular focus will be given on securing partnership and support for sustainable management of peatlands in Southeast Asia, which are the major source of fires and transboundary haze pollution.

Expected Outputs

- Agreed regional priorities and corresponding interests to promote and sustain partnerships for the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution;
- Agreed mechanisms to promote and sustain partnerships for the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution.

Who Should Attend?

- ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment (ASOEN), policy makers, researchers, academia from ASEAN Member Countries.
- Relevant regional and international organisations.
- Dialogue Partners of ASEAN, and other countries.
- Development financial institutions, donor communities.
- Other major stakeholders (private sector, plantation/ agricultural associations, NGOs, community groups, and other interest groups).

Events, Date and Venue

- The Conference will be held on 11-12 May 2006 at the Sheraton Hotel Ha Noi, Viet Nam.
- The 3rd Meeting of the Project Planning/ Preparation Working Group (PPPWG) for the IFAD/GEF Project on the Rehabilitation and Sustainable Use of Peatlands in Southeast Asia will be held on 8-10 May 2006 in Ha Noi back-to-back with the Conference (Trade Union Hotel).
- An exhibition showcasing initiatives and best practices on addressing fires and haze pollution will be held for the duration of the Conference.
- An optional day trip to Ha Long Bay will be organised by the Government of Viet Nam on 13 May 2006.

Organisers

The Conference is jointly organised by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Ministry of Agriculture and the ASEAN Secretariat.

Sponsors

The Conference is sponsored by the Government of Viet Nam and the ASEAN-UNDP Partnership Facility.