

4 December 1997

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Third Session of the Conference of the Parties to the  
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change  
1-10 December 1997  
Kyoto, Japan

**MESSAGE FROM MR. ADRIANUS MOOY, UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL,  
UNITED NATIONS AND EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND  
THE PACIFIC (ESCAP)**

Your Excellency Minister Ohki, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), it is a great honour to be able to address this message to this distinguished gathering. I would like to extend my congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, on your election to this important position and believe that under your able leadership, the Conference will achieve a great success. I would like to thank the Government of Japan for hosting this event and making the Asia-Pacific region for the first time the hub for global discussion on the climate change Convention.

Climate change and associated sea-level rise are matters of grave concern to the Asia-Pacific region. A large section of the population of the region is residing in coastal areas or river deltas, which are particularly vulnerable to sea-level rise and many of them are eking out a living from the resources of the coastal areas. Climatic phenomena such as the monsoon and the climatic anomalies shape the life of the people and the economies of the developing countries of the region. A substantial proportions of the population of the region are engaged in agriculture or fisheries for their subsistence, which are found to be vulnerable to climate change.

As early as in 1990, ESCAP raised the issues and implications of climate change at the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, which identified regional cooperation as an effective mechanism to build capacity to deal with the complex issue of climate change. This was followed up over a period of time to develop a regional network for information exchange and for national capacity building of the developing countries to deal with climate change issues, particularly in the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

ESCAP's activities in this field have been undertaken in close cooperation with other initiatives in the region. Recently, we carried out a region-wide questionnaire survey in close cooperation with the Environment Agency of Japan and the United Nations University, to assess the implementation status of the Convention and to identify the constraints and the needs of the

developing countries. Cooperation from 21 countries has enabled us to draw up an Asian and Pacific regional overview on response actions to address climate change. This overview was intensively discussed by experts from 18 countries of the region who gathered in September 1997 in Bangkok to formulate specific recommendations for further actions for regional cooperation.

To mention a few salient points of the regional overview, there are further needs for endogenous capacity building in the developing countries to prepare national communications and GHG inventories, to conduct studies for vulnerability assessment, and adaptation and mitigation measures. Needs were also identified for active involvement of the private sector, and raising public awareness, in which the media and NGOs have a key role to play. Research and studies should be intensified, utilizing in particular the regional endogenous expertise. The report of the meeting and the document "Regional cooperation and overview of response actions" have been distributed to bring the relevant findings and issues to the attention of the participants to the Conference.

ESCAP has cooperated with the Environment Agency of Japan in their series of Asia-Pacific Seminars on Climate Change since 1991. This series of Seminars provided a forum for exchange of information and experiences among the participating countries. ESCAP is also pleased to be a part of a region-wide project, Asia Least-Cost Greenhouse Gas Abatement Strategy (ALGAS) initiated by UNDP/GEF and executed by the Asian Development Bank. I should point out that our activities have benefited significantly from the cooperation extended by the Climate Change Secretariat, for which we are grateful.

Mr. Chairman,

It has been three and a half years since the Convention entered into force in March 1994. Adopted as a "framework", the Convention should be supplemented by concrete international actions, which should include further promotion of regional cooperation as an important vehicle for international action.

It is our hope that this session of the Conference of the Parties will provide the necessary momentum for enhanced global and regional cooperation, with the high wisdom and political will of decision makers, policy makers and all other stakeholders in the international community. I am sure that this Conference will be recalled by future generations, as a significant milestone in the efforts of humankind to protect the global environment. In the follow-up to the outcome of this session, ESCAP would be prepared, based on the foundation already laid, to play its supportive and coordinating role, within the constraints of our resources, to deal with the challenges of climate change.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.