



MEDIA RELEASE

12th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment and 8th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution

26 September 2012, Bangkok, Thailand

1. Ministers responsible for the environment from ASEAN Member States (AMS) held their 12th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment and the 8th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution on 26 September 2012 in Bangkok, Thailand. The Ministers reviewed regional cooperation on a number of environmental issues in particular the related actions in the environmental sustainability section of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Blueprint, and discussed new initiatives to further promote regional environmental cooperation.

2. The Ministers adopted the Bangkok Resolution on ASEAN Environmental Cooperation to reaffirm ASEAN's commitment to further strengthen ASEAN regional cooperation on natural resources and environment for sustainable development and regional integration and the realisation of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC). The Ministers also agreed to, among others, continue the efforts to establish a balance among economic growth, social development and environmental sustainability; strengthen ASEAN's commitments for the attainment of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and accelerate the implementation of the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development's outcomes, contribute actively towards the agreed outcome under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); and continue to work closely with Dialogue Partners to address existing and emerging global environmental issues.

3. The Ministers adopted the ASEAN Action Plan on Joint Response to Climate Change which aims to implement the ASEAN Leaders Statement on Joint Response to Climate Change adopted at the 16th ASEAN Summit in April 2010 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam.

4. The Ministers agreed in principle to issue the Joint Statement of ASEAN Environment Ministers for the Eleventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP-11) in October 2012, highlighting ASEAN's position towards a positive and equitable outcome at CBD COP11.

5. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) namely the conservation of biological

diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources; and urged the Parties to CBD to implement the three objectives in a balanced manner.

6. The Ministers urged Parties to CBD to develop domestic legislative, administrative and policy measures on Access and Benefit Sharing in contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, poverty eradication, and environmental sustainability following the adoption of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

7. The Ministers approved the nomination of U Minh Thuong National Park in Vietnam and Nat Ma Taung National Park in Myanmar as 31st and 32nd ASEAN Heritage Parks (AHP), respectively. The AHP aims to generate greater awareness, appreciation, enjoyment and conservation of ASEAN's rich natural heritage, through the creation of a regional network of representative protected areas.

8. The Ministers reviewed national, sub-regional and regional activities to address land and forest fires in the region and its associated transboundary haze pollution. The Ministers welcomed the significant progress in the implementation of the Work Programme of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution, including concrete on-the-ground activities; the progress in the development of the ASEAN-wide Fire Danger Rating System; implementation of the ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy (2006-2020) and the implementation of the Strategic Review on Sub-Regional Ministerial Steering Committee (MSC) on Transboundary Haze Pollution programmes. The Ministers, however, expressed serious concern on the report of the ASEAN Specialised Meteorological Centre (ASMC) which shows significant increase in hotspots in the region in 2012.

9. The Ministers noted that in the northern ASEAN region, the prevailing rainy season is expected to keep hotspot activities subdued until the onset of the traditional dry season in late November/December 2012. For the southern ASEAN region, an increase in rainfall is expected during the Inter-Monsoon season between October and November 2012 and this would help to subdue the hotspot activities in the region. However, with the El Nino conditions currently developing in the equatorial Pacific Ocean, dry season may slightly be prolonged and extended dry weather conditions leading to increased hotspot activities in the region can be expected. Therefore, the ASEAN Member States pledged to remain vigilant to continuously monitor the situation on the ground and implement haze prevention activities.

10. The Ministers noted that several ASEAN Member States have contributed to the ASEAN Transboundary Haze Pollution Control Fund towards realising the pledge of providing an initial seed contribution of US\$500,000 for the Fund.

11. The Ministers noted the progress of implementation of the project on Rehabilitation and Sustainable Use of Peatland Forests in Southeast Asia (funded by Global Environment Facility) and the SEApeat Project (funded by European Union), including the various activities conducted at the pilot sites in Indonesia,

Malaysia, Philippines and Viet Nam. The Ministers encouraged international and regional collaborative partnerships to support this Project as it seeks to address climate change and biodiversity loss through mitigation of land and forest fires.

12. The Ministers noted the completion of the ASEAN Environmentally Sustainable Cities (ESC) Model Cities (Year 1) project funded by the Government of Japan which has provided AMS with experience and confidence in implementing and improving their ESC activities. The Ministers look forward to the implementation of the Promotion of Environmentally Sustainable Cities (ESC) in ASEAN and East Asian Countries (Year 2).

13. The Ministers expressed appreciation to the Government of Malaysia for hosting the inaugural ASEAN Eco-schools Award 2012 for primary and secondary eco-schools from ASEAN Member States in conjunction with the ASEAN Environment Year (AEY) Celebration 2012 on 17-18 July 2012 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Award recognises exemplary efforts of the schools in inculcating environmental awareness in every aspect of education to their students and surrounding communities.

14. The Ministers will meet their counterparts from the People's Republic of China, Japan and Republic of Korea at the 11th ASEAN Plus Three Environment Ministers Meeting on 27 September 2012 to exchange views on global environmental issues, and to discuss activities on areas such as biodiversity, climate change, environmental education, water resources management, promotion of environmentally sound technology and cleaner production, and environmentally sustainable cities. The Ministers will also meet their counterparts from the East Asia Summit participating countries at the 3rd East Asia Summit Environment Ministers Meeting to discuss and exchange views on the progress of EAS cooperation on environment.

15. The Ministers responsible for the environment will meet again in Indonesia tentatively in October 2013 on the occasion of the 14th Informal ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment.
