

REGIONAL MECHANISM FOR ECO-PEACE IN NORTHEAST ASIA

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There is a new and different threat to Northeast Asian region in this new millenium. Without proper management of environmental threats, the peace and security of the region would not be achieved ultimately. It is the peace and security that are threatened by ourselves. It requires concerted actions and participation of the people of the region in order to tackle the problems. Eco-peace, which is defined as ultimate peace with the environment and peace amongst the people from cultural collisions over the issue of the integrating environment and development, is one of the most challenging tasks in Northeast Asia.

Northeast Asian region faces a wide variety of environmental threats, yet has not developed an adequate set of management systems to address the problems properly. Problems include pollution from a wide range of land-based sources such as industry, municipalities, and agriculture. Oceans in the region receive large amounts of waste from the extensive development along their respective coastlines. Moreover, transboundary air pollution is causing big concern in the region.

Civil society could play central roles in overcoming these obstacles. An effectively mobilized and articulate citizenry is central to the task of building and sustaining strong, capable, publicly accountable governments with the political will to meet the sustainability challenge. Civil society groups can fulfill six broad functional roles in environmental governance. These are problem solving, creative intellectual input, advocacy, provision of service, watchdog, and mobilization financial resources. The strategic involvement of NGOs can be crucial not only in enhancing domestic environmental performance but in "raising the bar" internationally. With basic principle for operation of regional environmental governance, "eco-peace network" is suggested in order to function these roles. This network is designed to achieve Northeast Asian region's ecological peace between people of the region and their environment, and conciliation of the diverse cultural interpretations over the environmental problems.

Major functions of the Eco-peace Network for Northeast Asia are;

- 1) Prevention of the environmentally harmful activities in the region.
- 2) Peaceful resolution of environmental disputes amongst member countries
- 3) Training of civil society leaders (NGO leaders, members of Parliament, journalists, business leaders, lawyers etc)
- 4) Research and publication of educational informations, including exchange of informations regarding dispute resolution success cases in the region .
- 5) Conducting public awareness campaign about the relationship between environment and peace .

This network will be in close relationship with the current mechanism for region's environmental governance.