

Concept Paper
ASEM Environment Ministers' Meeting on
Sustainable Water and Forest Management
Ulaanbaatar, 22-23 May 2012

Background

During the 8thASEM Summit H.E.Mr. ELBEGDORJ Tsakhia, the President of Mongolia put forward an initiative to host the 4th ASEM Environment Ministers' Meeting on Sustainable Water and Forest Management.

Water and forest are the most important resources of our globe which are dwindling in reserves even more due to climate change and unsound human activities.

The availability and access to clean water is increasingly threatened by overuse, misuse and pollution, while forests have been cut and burnt at unprecedented scale. In recent years, estimates for deforestation and forest degradation were shown to account for 20-25 percent of greenhouse gas emissions.

As a country prone to extreme climate conditions and natural disasters, Mongolia has been efficiently working towards maintaining environmental balance and healthy ecosystem through developing and strengthening cooperation at regional and sub-regional levels. ASEM presents a broad framework for dialogue and cooperation among its partners. Therefore, Mongolia views that holding of the Meeting would provide the member countries timely opportunity to exchange views on appropriate policies and best practices encourage and facilitate further cooperation and raise public awareness of scarcity of water and forests.

Date and venue

The Meeting will take place in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, from 22-23 May 2012.

Objectives of the Meeting

The sustainable water and forest management is a key factor in achieving social, economic and environmental goals. Therefore, there is a need for an integrated approach towards developing effective and efficient management of water and forest resources.

The meeting will aim to:

- Provide a platform to understand the water and forest issues and the challenges facing ASEM countries;
- Exchange opinions and share knowledge and experiences; and
- Facilitate future cooperation.

Organization

The Meeting will consist of an Opening and two Plenary Sessions followed by discussions. Two distinguished guest speakers would be invited as lead discussants.

Member states are invited to make respective country presentations and encouraged to submit proposals for recommendations on water and forest initiatives for future ASEM cooperation.

One-day field trip will be organized on 23 May 2012 to the Khustai National Park, which is the first designated National Park with the internationally recognized program on *takhi* (Przewalski Horse) reintroduction and located 100 km west of the capital city of Ulaanbaatar. The Khustai National Park is a certified member of the UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Reserves Organization.

Participants

All ASEM members are cordially invited to send their representatives at the highest possible level. The participating quota is 1+3. Representatives from relevant international organizations are welcome to attend the Meeting.

Expenses

Participants are expected to pay for their own international travel and accommodation. The Government of Mongolia will cover the organizing and administrative cost of the Meeting, including the field trip.

Registration

Delegates are kindly requested to send the completed registration forms by 1 April 2012 to the following contact:

Mr. GANKHUYAG Sodnom (ASEM Focal Point)
Consellor of the International Organizations Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Tel.: +976-51-261641 (direct line)
Fax: +976-11-322127
E-mail: gankhuyags@mfat.gov.mn and oubg@mfat.gov.mn

Co-sponsors

Mongolia welcomes co-sponsorship of this activity by interested ASEM partners. Expression of interest is urged to be submitted via ASEM contact points at earliest convenience.