

Chair's Summary

Fourth Inter-Governmental Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN)

18 - 20 March 1999, Kobe, Japan

Summary Report of the Chair, Mr. Hironori Hamanaka and Vice Chairs, Mr. Mahboob Elahi and Dr. Subramaniam Moten

This Meeting was attended by representatives from Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Russia, Thailand, United States of America, Vietnam, observers from Canada, Japan, IAI, IGES, SARCS, SASCOM, START Oceania, the International START Secretariat, and by the two Co-Chairs of the APN Scientific Planning Group. The meeting was also attended by participants from Hyogo Prefecture. The list of participants is given in [Attachment I](#).

1. Opening

An opening address was given by Mr. Hironori Hamanaka, Director General of the Global Environment Department, Environment Agency of Japan. Mr. Hamanaka noted that the establishment of structures for regional or international cooperation, over and above the individual efforts of each country, is exceedingly important, and how the APN has been steadily producing results and expanding its activities since it was formally launched four years ago. He noted that the demands for research at the regional level are growing rapidly, that there is a need for a more efficient and strategic system to respond to this demand, and that the decisions to be made on the APN strategic plan and other important topics of this meeting are all important steps in creating the future course for the APN. Mr. Hamanaka also expressed appreciation for the considerable support from Hyogo Prefecture for this meeting, and expressed his desire to help the APN to grow as an inter-governmental network, and to build on various forms of collaboration with countries so that initiatives are developed which benefit the entire region.

The Governor of Hyogo Prefecture, Mr. Toshitami Kaihara, made some welcoming remarks and expressed his deep respect for those involved in undertaking efforts toward environmental conservation. The Governor noted the proposed establishment of the APN Center in Kobe and the Prefecture's offer of support in this effort. He noted how Kobe has been a center for internationalization in Japan and has developed as a community rich in a variety of cultures. He expressed his appreciation for the support that was received following the occurrence of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake from many of the countries represented at the meeting, and offered his best wishes for a

successful meeting.

The Director of the APN Secretariat, Mr. Hideyuki Mori, welcomed the meeting participants and expressed his thanks for all of the support which the APN has received. He noted that the APN now stands at a crossroads and that many important issues which will be decided upon at the IGM will guide the direction and growth of the APN in the coming years.

2. Election of Officers

Mr. Hironori Hamanaka was elected as Chair. Dr. Subramaniam Moten of Malaysia and Mr. Mahboob Elahi of Pakistan were elected as Vice-Chairs.

3. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted as proposed.

4. Report From the Secretariat

The Director provided a basic outline of the key issues addressed in the past year such as the development of the Draft Strategic Plan and the proposals selection process and gave an overview of the agenda topics to be covered during this meeting. The Secretariat provided an overview of its work during the last year that included the current year's proposals process, as well as other administrative responsibilities such as the APN newsletter, the APN home-page, SASCOM and TEACOM APN Liaison Officer Reports, fund raising, advertising of research fellowships, and receiving visits from persons involved in global change research.

5. Relocation of APN Secretariat

The Director provided background information concerning the proposed relocation of the APN Secretariat from Tokyo to Kobe, Hyogo Prefecture. He commented how the move to Kobe would result in a strengthened Secretariat including more full time staff through the generous contributions to be made by Hyogo Prefecture, and a reduction in administrative costs.

Mr. Takeo Terahata of Hyogo Prefecture made a presentation that included additional details on the proposed the APN office. He commented on how their proposal will help the APN become a stronger and more independent organization, and how Hyogo Prefecture is willing to offer their full support for the development of the APN office. The proposal for the move of the APN office from Tokyo to Kobe was well received and accepted by the meeting participants. The Chair commented that the strengthening of

the APN is a benefit for all member countries, and that an increase in the international activities of the APN is a high priority that will ensure the regional character for the APN in the years ahead.

6. Scientific Planning Group Report & Consideration of 1999/2000 Project Proposals

Prof. Keiji Higuchi, Co-Chair of the Scientific Planning Group (SPG), gave a summary of the results of the February SPG

Meeting held in Jakarta in February 1999 as well as APN-related scientific activities of the past year. He commented on the scientific presentations which were made at the SPG meeting and provided brief remarks for each topic of the summary report. A description was presented of the procedures used to recommend 12 projects out of 69 proposals received in the 1999/2000 APN project proposals process. Mention was made of the consideration to geographical balance, budgets, participation of member countries, and collaboration given by both the Small Group and the SPG members in arriving at the SPG recommended project proposal listing. After discussion, the IGM participants approved the SPG recommendation for APN funding for 12 projects.

In considering the SPG report, the meeting congratulated the SPG on their work and the transparent review and evaluation process. Comments made by the IGM representatives included the need to consider a system to evaluate past projects; the need for good reporting after completion of projects; a suggestion to make better use of the Internet to distribute results of projects; and the need for improved communication between Focal Points and SPG members and coordination by the Secretariat for them. The Director assured the meeting that if funds were available, the Secretariat would make efforts to assist them to obtain the means of effective communications such as fax or e-mail when needed.

Prof. Higuchi thanked Dr. Aprilani Soegiarto of Indonesia, who was stepping down as one of the Co-Chairs of the SPG, after many years supporting the APN, and announced that Prof. Zhao Zong-ci of China would be starting a two-year term as Co-Chair.

7. Financial Reports, 1999/2000 Budget and Operating Plan

The Secretariat presented the Final 1997/98 Financial Report for the fiscal year ending March 1998, the Draft 1998/99 Financial Report, the Proposed 1999/2000 Budget and Draft 1999/2000 Operating Plan. Delegates were asked to consider and approve each of these. It was noted that financial reports would be made separately regarding contributions to APN funded activities from the U.S. Global Change Research Program, which were administered to APN projects through START during the past two years. The Director drew attention to the fact that the move to Kobe and proposed combining of the IGM and SPG meetings in the future would reduce administrative costs, leaving

more for APN funded activities. He said the Secretariat will be seeking funds from new sources, including member countries. The two Financial Reports and Draft budget were adopted by the IGM.

8. APN Priorities for Scientific Program for 2000/2001

Delegates considered the recommendations from the Scientific Planning Group for priority areas for APN support in the next cycle, beginning with the next Call for Proposals due in September 1999. The Director explained that one of the main reasons for setting scientific priority areas was to explore the possibility of attracting additional funds from potential sources. After a discussion, a working group was established to consider opinions expressed, and report on the second day of the meeting. The final conclusion of the IGM was that there would be two priority topics in the Scientific Program for the next Call for Proposals: (1) climate change and variability, and (2) human dimensions of global environmental change. Other scientific topics which have been identified by the APN will not be excluded from funding. The Call for Proposals will include notification of these two priorities, and reviewers of proposals will be expected to give extra attention to them.

The meeting welcomed the suggestion in the Secretariat report that one task in the next year would be to establish an efficient mechanism to determine scientific priorities each year.

9. Inaugural Symposium / Workshop

Participants were invited to suggest ideas for a theme for the inaugural symposium/workshop proposed to be held in Kobe in the autumn, in the context of APN priorities for future scientific research. The IGM agreed on the title of "The Challenges of Global Environmental Change for the Asia-Pacific Region: A Scientific Assessment" and encouraged the Secretariat to work with Hyogo Prefecture and scientists associated with the APN to plan the event. It was felt that the event should cover a range of topics which demonstrate the breadth of issues the APN addresses. In addition, one or two days of scoping workshops attended by specialists, related to the APN scientific priorities would be held before or after the event.

10. Strategic Plan

The Secretariat explained the background of the process to develop the draft APN Strategic Plan during the past year and the main points of the Plan. A number of comments were made which the Secretariat will include in the final version. Revised sections are noted in Attachment II. The Strategic Plan was adopted by the IGM. The meeting recognized that monitoring, review, and adjustments during the implementation of the plan would be necessary.

11. Formal Recognition of the APN

The Secretariat reported on discussions with member countries during the year about a document to give more formal recognition to the APN. The perceived necessity for formal recognition was different in some countries. Participants exchanged views about the need for formal recognition and about the procedure required for approval in their countries. Some delegates felt more formal recognition was needed to facilitate work to attract more funds for APN activities to attract in-kind support, and to make it easier for countries and organizations to deal with the APN. It was pointed out that IAI, which had a treaty signed by 18 countries was one positive model for the APN to aim for. Some delegates expressed their views that a more convincing argument is necessary to show the need for a document to give more formal recognition to the APN. Others expressed the view that an agreement would be desirable. The view was expressed that this is an important document, with the understanding that consultations of representatives with their own governments would be necessary before adoption. It was agreed that further consultations would be needed, that efforts to develop more widely acceptable text will continue, and the outcomes will be reported to the next IGM.

12. Project Proposal Criteria and Evaluation Process

The Secretariat presented recommendations from the SPG to improve the criteria and evaluation process for project proposals, and suggested ways to improve administrative procedures. It was noted that the number of proposals received is likely to increase, and a more efficient system is needed to select projects for funding. A working group was established to take into account many suggestions, and made recommendations of changes to the process. The recommendations were approved by the IGM and are to be used to modify the relevant documents, and applied during the next Call for Proposals. Recommendations are noted in Attachment III.

It was clarified that project proponents should be required to provide information on in-kind funding and how their proposals would address the issue of capacity building.

13. APN 'Organisational Arrangements and Procedures'

The Secretariat proposed changes to the current Organisational Structure of the APN to reflect the need for increased management and policy development between annual meetings of the SPG and IGM. Many comments were made during the discussion, which were refined by a working group. The IGM discussed the recommendations of the working group and approved changes as shown in Attachment IV.

It was noted that the Secretariat would need to consider the logistical difficulties of convening the Steering Group and the possibility that elected members may have to transfer their responsibilities as national Focal Point during their time on the Steering

Group. In such a case it was agreed that they should consult with the Director on what action should be taken regarding their role as a member of the Steering Group. The Director clarified that the proposed arrangement was considered an interim measure and that at the next IGM the long-term form of the Steering Group would be reconsidered. It was further clarified that the Director of the Secretariat would participate in the Steering Group on behalf of the Secretariat.

The meeting elected Australia, Malaysia and Pakistan as the IGM representatives to the Steering Group, with Pakistan as Chair. It was noted that the members would need to seek permission from their governments, particularly in the case of Australia whose representative at the IGM was not the national Focal Point. If Australia were unable to act as a member of the Steering Group it was agreed that the USA would instead become the IGM representative.

14. Partnership with International Networks and Programmes

Dr. Armando Rabuffetti of Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI), a sister inter-governmental organization of the APN in the Americas, made a presentation about the history, structure, scientific programme, and financing of IAI. With 18 countries now involved, and guided by a formal agreement, IAI has 9 persons in an Executive Council elected every two years. There are 10 scientists in a Scientific Advisory Committee who are elected every three years and can be re-elected only once. He mentioned that continuity of representatives from countries to IAI has been important to ensure institutional progress. Fund sources include international funds, in-kind support from member countries, and contributions from member countries using a formula based on GDP. Dr. Rabuffetti suggested that APN and IAI consider joint activities on common issues whether research or synthesis, and urged communications between scientific planning personnel in both networks.

Prof. Roland Fuchs of the International START Secretariat gave an update of START activities. He provided detail on the relationship of START to the international science programmes, activities of START in each region, and highlighted some current topics including promising work relating to CLIMAG which studies climate and agriculture. Prof. Fuchs said that the APN and START could collaborate more closely and invited ideas on how this could be carried out.

Mr. Kazuo Matsushita, acting Vice-President of the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), gave a brief introduction to the work of IGES, which is to carry out policy-oriented research and formulate innovative policy instruments and environmental strategies for sustainable development, focusing on the Asian Pacific region. IGES now has 6 strategic research projects: climate change, urban environment, forest conservation, environmental education, environmental governance, and new development patterns. He said that IGES will host the National Greenhouse Gas Inventories Programme of the IPCC, and a related Technical Support Unit. Mr. Matsushita expressed the hope that IGES can work closely with the APN, and

appreciated APN support which has been extended to organize the 1999 Open Meeting of the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change Research Community to be held at IGES in June 1999.

15. Science Presentations

Prof. Aprilani Soegiarto made a presentation on Global Change Research in Southeast Asia, with particular reference to Indonesia. Prof. AP Mitra made a presentation on 'Greenhouse Gases in the Asian Region and the Kyoto Protocol'.

During the ensuing discussions, it was pointed out that APN could provide valuable functions where funds from many sources and the cooperation of many countries are necessary. It could also consider ways to use existing data and developing them into useful information for policy. APN could also help promote the use of existing monitoring resources and equipment. It was pointed out that cooperation involving many countries has taken place for research and monitoring efforts relating to global change, and that once equipment is in place, it can be utilized at much less than the original cost, and that the APN might be able to help use existing resources.

16. Other Business

SASCOM raised the issue of science communication, suggesting that the APN could cooperate with science centres, etc. Professor Higuchi outlined work of the Asia-Pacific Network of Science Centres (ASPAC) and invited the APN to work together with them. The Director referred the meeting to the Strategic Plan which expresses that very intention.

It was suggested that national networks might help raise the profile of the APN, and the Director of START offered to explore possibilities for involving SPG members in national committees. It was agreed that the APN should strive to develop its national and sub-regional structures.

17. Next Meeting

The Director described benefits of holding APN meetings in different sub-regions within the Asia-Pacific region. With this in mind, he proposed to the meeting that the joint IGM/SPG meeting to be held next year in south Asia, and suggested Pakistan. The delegate of Pakistan said that he would convey the request to his government and ensured that it would be given serious consideration.

18. Closing

Closing remarks were made by the Hon. Kenji Manabe, Minister of State and Director General of the Environment Agency of Japan.

Participants expressed their appreciation to Hyogo Prefecture and the Government of Japan for hosting the meeting, and to the Secretariat for their organization of the meeting. Special thanks were again given to Dr. Aprilani for his many years of support for the APN, since the first planning workshop in Jakarta. The meeting also expressed appreciation to the Chair and Vice-Chairs for their smooth management of the meeting.

Attachment I

4th APN Inter-Governmental Meeting 18-20 March 1999, Kobe, Japan

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