

## **Chair's Summary**

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

29-30 March 2000, Islamabad, Pakistan

### **Summary Report of the Chair, Mr. Mahboob Elahi and Vice Chairs, Dr. Subramaniam Moten and Mr. Kazunobu Onogawa**

This Meeting was attended by representatives from Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and the United States of America, and observers from Pakistan and the International START Secretariat, and by the two Co-Chairs of the APN Scientific Planning Group. The list of participants is given in [Attachment I](#).

#### **1. Opening**

The Director of the APN Secretariat, Mr. Hiroaki Takagi, introduced Qari Tahir Mehmood who recited verses from the holy Quran

The Director then welcomed the meeting participants and expressed his thanks to Pakistan for hosting the meeting. He gave some highlights from the previous year's events, and expressed his belief that the next year would be a fruitful one, partly thanks to an anticipated new contribution from Environment Australia to the APN budget and an increased contribution from the Environment Agency of Japan.

An opening address was given by His Excellency Omar Asghar Khan, Minister for Environment, Local Government & Rural Development and Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis. In his speech he stressed the importance of inter-disciplinary research as a means of solving the many global environmental problems that affect the Asia-Pacific region. Such problems are not always considered a high priority, but the true extent to which they underpin issues such as economic development and food security is often ignored. Structures for regional cooperation, such as the APN, are vital to maximise the contribution countries can make to global change research, but for such structures to be effective member countries need to be as active as possible. He expressed his hope that Pakistan's hosting of the 5th Scientific Planning Group and Inter-Governmental Meetings would strengthen their future participation in APN.

#### **2. Election of Officers**

Mr. Mahboob Elahi of Pakistan was elected as Chair. Dr. Subramaniam Moten of Malaysia and Mr. Kazunobu Onogawa of Japan were elected as Vice-Chairs.

### **3. Adoption of Agenda**

The agenda was adopted as proposed.

### **4. Report From the Secretariat**

The APN Secretariat gave a review of the year's achievements. The relocation of the Secretariat from Tokyo to Kobe had been completed successfully with the support of Hyogo Prefecture. Similarly the Secretariat staffing had been increased; a record number of projects had been supported; the first APN Symposium and Scoping Workshops had been held successfully; and there had been positive developments in terms of membership inquiries, communications and the appointment of two new APN Liaison Officers for Southeast Asia and Oceania.

A summary of the 1999/2000 sponsored projects and the APN Liaison Officer reports were distributed.

### **5. Financial Reports, 2000/2001 Budget and Strategic Objectives**

The Secretariat presented the Final 1998/99 Financial Report for the fiscal year ending March 1999, the Draft 1999/2000 Financial Report and the Proposed 2000/2001 Budget and Strategic Objectives. Delegates were asked to consider and approve each of these.

The meeting commended the Secretariat on both the dramatic increase in the overall budget in recent years and also on the way that administration costs had been reduced to under 20% of the overall budget. Concerns were expressed about the need to maintain the effort to obtain funds from new sources such as the private sector, and also to ensure that the increase in funds is reflected in an increase in the number of projects funded.

During the ensuing discussion delegates stressed the need for a coherent approach to scientific priorities enabling APN to focus on the issues of major importance and to maximise results. This approach should be reflected across all aspects of APN's work.

### **6. Scientific Planning Group Report**

Prof. Keiji Higuchi, Co-Chair of the Scientific Planning Group (SPG), gave a summary of the results of the SPG Meeting. He provided brief remarks for each topic of the

summary report and informed the meeting of the appointment of Dr. Graeme Pearman as the new Co-Chair to succeed him.

## **7. APN Networking and Capacity Building Programme**

The Secretariat presented a proposal for an APN Networking and Capacity Building Programme, funded by the Environment Agency of Japan, designed to increase the involvement of those countries that have until now been least involved in APN activities. It is proposed to target Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Vietnam in the first year, but to extend the trial period to 2 years with Mongolia and Nepal to be involved in the second year. The programme was warmly welcomed and received strong support from the members. It was clarified that the countries involved would decide their own research priorities within their regional groups, and that these discussions had already begun for the South Asian countries. The delegates expressed their desire that this programme be expanded to include a larger number of developing countries in the longer term.

## **8. 2000/1 Funded Activities**

Prof. Zhao, Co-Chair of the SPG, presented the procedures used to recommend 16 projects out of 72 proposals received in the 2000/2001 APN proposals process. She outlined that the Small Group and SPG had used the review ranking as the main basis for their funding recommendations, but that other important factors such as regional or thematic distribution, opportunities to build on past successes, country involvement or previous performance had also been considered. After discussion, the IGM participants approved the SPG recommendation for APN funding for 16 projects, including projects based in Korea and Sri Lanka for the first time.

## **9. Review of Proposals Process**

The Secretariat reported the results of the review of the APN Proposals Process commissioned by the 4th IGM. Recommendations were made on a number of issues designed to improve fairness, efficiency and quality of service to proponents. After some discussions about detailed aspects of the pre-proposals system and the review process, the recommendations, as amended by the SPG, were approved by the IGM.

## **10. System for identifying Key Scientific Priorities**

The Secretariat introduced the proposed system for identifying Key Scientific Priorities. It was recognised that the system as proposed provided for a transparent and practical approach. The system was adopted by the meeting, including an amendment suggested by the SPG to introduce greater flexibility. It was clarified by the Secretariat

that for the next year the current priorities of Human Dimensions and Climate Change & Variability would be retained.

### **11. CO<sub>2</sub> Inter-Calibration Workshop**

On behalf of Japan Mr. Onogawa introduced a proposal for a workshop to promote efforts to improve the inter-calibration of CO<sub>2</sub> measurements which is essential to ensure fully comparable data. These measurements are used to identify the origins of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, an essential task to evaluate the success of efforts to reduce anthropogenic emissions. He clarified that the purpose of organising this meeting through the APN was to ensure a broader participation by Asia-Pacific countries and for this reason the Environment Agency of Japan proposed to provide a Special Fund to the APN. He indicated that some SPG members had already approached him over the possibility for involvement of the relevant agencies in their countries, and encouraged IGM members to do likewise. His proposal was welcomed by the meeting.

### **12. START Update**

On behalf of START International Prof. Fuchs gave an update on recent developments within the START system. He focused in particular on START's catalytic role and its focus on capacity building. He then suggested that APN and START should further explore avenues for cooperation, in particular with regard to expanding the role of Liaison Officers, database development and capacity building.

### **13. APN Recognition Document**

After an introduction by the Director, delegates were asked to comment on the Secretariat proposal. They indicated their desire to see the APN further develop, and gave their national positions. The majority of delegates in principle supported the proposal made by the Secretariat. It was suggested that in the longer term the APN should keep in mind the need for a more systematic document.

There followed extensive discussions on the precise formulation of the document, and a drafting group was formed to improve the draft. A revised version was presented to the meeting and after further discussions on points of detail, final agreement was reached on the second day of the meeting. The adopted document, entitled 'Conclusion on the Further Development of the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN)', is included as [Attachment II](#).

### **14. Next Meeting**

The Director indicated that Korea was willing to host the next SPG and IGM in March

2001. Mr. Won-Woo Shin and Mr. Seung-Hwa Ko gave further details of their plan to hold the meeting on Cheju island. This was welcomed by the meeting.

## **15. Other Business**

A number of points were raised related to raising public awareness through the media and raising the profile of the APN and global change more generally.

## **16. Science Presentations**

Two science presentations were given. Dr. Amir Muhammed made a presentation on the major issues and the national approach to global change research in Pakistan. Prof. Zhao introduced several issues of global change. A short discussion on the importance of free exchange of data followed.

## **17. Closing**

The meeting expressed its appreciation to Pakistan and the Ministry of Environment, Local Government and Rural Development for hosting the 5th IGM, and to the Secretariat for their organization of the meeting. The meeting also expressed appreciation to the Chair and Vice-Chairs for their smooth management of the proceedings. Prof. Higuchi's tremendous contribution to the APN and his long service as Co-Chair of the Scientific Planning Group was applauded.

In his closing remarks Mr. Elahi thanked the APN for the opportunity to host the SPG and IGM, and expressed his hope that this would help increase the involvement of Pakistan in the APN. He also indicated his thanks to his colleagues in the Government of Pakistan for all their assistance in arranging the meetings.

## **Attachment I**

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## **Attachment II**

### **Conclusion on the Further Development of the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research (APN)**

Representatives from 16 countries participating in the 5th Inter-Governmental Meeting of the APN held in Islamabad, Pakistan, on 29-30 March 2000:

Convinced that rapid economic development and population growth, coupled with a unique combination of diverse social, agricultural and environmental systems, make it particularly important to identify and address the problems that may arise from global environmental change in the Asia-Pacific region;

Believing that international cooperation among governments and scientists will help increase the understanding of the complex mechanisms, and impacts on ecosystems and human society, of global environmental change in the Asia-Pacific region;

Reached the conclusion that:

1. The flexible and practical approaches utilised by the APN are effective means of expanding global change research activities throughout the Asia-Pacific region;
2. There is a vital need for more substantial participation by the countries of the region;
3. Increased scientific, technical, financial and other support are essential to maximise the effectiveness of the APN;
4. The APN should actively encourage public and private organisations to participate in its activities;
5. The APN needs to coordinate further its activities with those of relevant international conventions, initiatives and organisations to ensure it is responsive to regional needs, and to promote the applicable science-policy dialogue; and
6. The APN Strategic Plan for the period 1999-2004 is a fully appropriate vehicle for advancing the APN's goals and maximising outputs.