



Asian Development Bank

**ADB-WWF Discussion Panel on  
"Greening Asia's Footprint: From Global Crises to Sustainability"**

Opening Remarks by Ursula Schaefer-Preuss

ADB Vice-President, Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development

ADB Annual Meeting - 2 May 2009, Bali, Indonesia

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I am pleased to have the honor of opening this discussion panel, the first open event of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting. I wish to thank our Indonesian hosts as well as our partners in organizing this panel, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). Today, I would like to focus on the importance of sustainable development for the Asia-Pacific region, and the actions that ADB has been taken to address the challenges, both with our developing member countries and with our partners, including the WWF. In addition, I will also like to talk about how ADB has been working to reduce our own corporate footprints.

The title of this session refers to the human demand on the ecosystems of the Asia-Pacific region, our footprint. Excessive demand has taken us down a perilous path, the dangers of which have been most recently highlighted by a study undertaken by ADB, and financed by DFID (*Regional Review of the Economics of Climate Change in Southeast Asia*) released earlier this week. The study finds that if we don't change our way of living, four Southeast Asian countries - Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam - could experience combined damages equivalent to 6.7% of their GDP by the end of this century (2100), higher than the costs of the current financial crisis.

Yet such dire forecasts need not become to pass, if we act now to lighten our footprint and make it greener. In fact, the economic crisis offers an opportunity to reinvigorate a transition across the Asian and the Pacific region towards a more climate-resilient and low-carbon economy. Green stimulus programs can simultaneously shore up economies, create jobs, reduce poverty, lower carbon emissions, and make the region more prepared for the worst effects of climate change.

A more urgent and serious response to growing environmental imbalances requires that we do not overlook the human element when planning action. Particularly, ADB has recognized that gender is an important issue on the environment and climate change agenda. For example, 70-80% of those who died in the Indian Ocean Tsunami of December 2004 were women. In the case of climate change mitigation efforts, renewable energy technology choices lean toward large-scale endeavors that neglect women's needs for household energy and small enterprise. Women's participation in decision-making forums on climate change and disaster preparedness is weak, meaning that gender aspects are often overlooked in the data considered and the decisions made.

More generally, we need to inspire everyone in our societies to change their behavior. This must begin with parents setting positive examples for their children, and for our schools to incorporate education on environmental sustainability into curriculums from a young age.

### ***ADB's Plan of Action***

More ADB-financed projects than ever before are developed with "environmental sustainability" as a theme. Last year we approved a record 26 projects with this theme, totaling \$2.6 billion worth of financing. Under our long-term strategic framework, Strategy 2020, ADB will expand its promotion of – and investment in – sound environmental management. In particular, we will emphasize the following in our operations:

- 1) Moving economies on to low-carbon growth paths and adapt to unavoidable climate change impacts by building climate resilience into development planning, sectoral investments, and community programs, and by "climate proofing" projects.
- 2) Addressing a range of environmental problems resulting from rapid urbanization by reducing air and water pollution, supporting cleaner modes of transport, improving systems for solid waste management, and reducing urban waste.
- 3) Managing natural resource systems upon which the majority of the region's poor people depend for their livelihoods.
- 4) Mainstreaming environmental considerations into national policies and investment programs, and strengthening regulatory and enforcement capacities of relevant institutions with regard to environmental management.
- 5) Promoting stronger engagement by the private sector and civil society to improve natural resources management and increase investment flows in environmental sustainability.
- 6) Reinforcing environmental safeguards in our operations and in country systems, and promoting regional cooperation on shared environmental public goods.

We are also working to get our own "house" in order: ADB's Manila headquarters is a "green building" designed for low heat absorption. We've installed solar panels to provide electricity for the fountains on our building's grounds. We maximize the use of information technology to reduce paper use, and work with moving companies to recycle package materials for shipments of official materials and the goods of ADB staff members. Since 2004, we have reduced electricity consumption by 3.6% even as our activities and staff have significantly increased.

### ***Strengthening Environmental Management through Partnerships***

We are very much aware that we must work with a range of partners to maximize the impact of our efforts. In this context, I would like to quote three programs in which we are working with others to support the sound management of natural resource systems, and to protect the forests, wetlands, rivers, and coral reefs upon which most poor people in Asia and the Pacific depend for their livelihoods.

One such program is the **Greater Mekong Subregion Core Environment Program (CEP)** and its flagship **Biodiversity Conservation Corridor Initiative**. The program focuses on integrating environmental consideration into key development sectors such as tourism, transport and

energy, and promoting local livelihood and conservation activities within high-value biodiversity landscapes. It is being implemented in collaboration with governments, local communities, university networks, donors, and nongovernment organizations. The World Conservation Union (IUCN) and WWF are among our partners in this program.

The **Coral Triangle Initiative** – a regional effort of Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste - aims to preserve and manage marine resources. ADB is mobilizing resources for this initiative. Other partners in this initiative include the Governments of the United States and Australia, and leading international NGOs such as the WWF, Conservation International, and The Nature Conservancy. The Global Environment Fund (GEF) has committed about \$65 million in grant support for the Coral Triangle Initiative.

Borneo Island is home to orangutans, elephants, rhinos, and countless undiscovered plants and animal species. Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei have recognized the global and local significance of the wildlife and forests, and have come together to form the **Heart of Borneo Initiative**. The initiative provides a framework for regional cooperation and national action to conserve the 220,000 km<sup>2</sup> of forests in the pristine core, and to improve management along its margins, where forests are subject to pressures from unsustainable logging practices and conversion to palm oil and forest plantations. ADB is developing technical assistance and pilot demonstration activities in Indonesia, and is currently seeking GEF financing.

### **Conclusion**

Let me conclude in stating that through such initiatives, you can see that ADB is committed to helping our developing member countries address the serious environmental and climate change challenges facing the region. Only through effective partnerships and the involvement of all stakeholders, we can achieve progress in this crucial agenda.

I want to thank you again for participating in this important early morning panel. I look forward to the presentations and the discussions which will follow.