

**HA NOI STATEMENT
ON PROMOTING PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE ASEAN AGREEMENT ON TRANSBOUNDARY HAZE
POLLUTION**

1. The Conference on Promoting Partnerships for the Implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution was held on 11-13 May 2006 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam. The Conference was jointly organised by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Viet Nam, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Viet Nam and the ASEAN Secretariat, with funding support from the Government of Viet Nam and the ASEAN-UNDP Partnership Facility.
2. The Conference was held as part of ASEAN's efforts to disseminate and promote better understanding of key aspects of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution; share the progress and articulate further needs for effective implementation of the Agreement; promote and strengthen partnership with relevant regional and international organisations and international donor community; and explore areas of cooperation to meet future challenges of land and forest fires and transboundary haze pollution in the ASEAN region.
3. The Conference was attended by 120 participants from ASEAN Member Countries, Dialogue Partners of ASEAN, relevant regional and international organisations, non-governmental organisations, academia and research institutions, and international donor community. An exhibition was held throughout the Conference to showcase regional and national initiatives and best practices to address fire and transboundary haze pollution.
4. Progress on the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution was highlighted on the first day of the Conference. The ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy, 2006-2020 was also highlighted during the Conference. Detailed discussions were held in working groups on issues related to sustainable management and rehabilitation of peatlands, community-based actions for fire prevention and sustainable management, and partnerships and funding mechanisms. A high-level roundtable involving the ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment and senior representatives from regional and international organisations and the international donor community reviewed the recommendations and explored potential areas for collaboration and partnership.

5. The Conference noted with concern the loss and degradation of peatlands in Southeast Asia and recognised that degraded peatlands have been the major source of fires and transboundary haze pollution in the region. The Conference fully supported the implementation of the ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy, which comprehensively addresses not only the root causes of peatland fires and the associated transboundary haze pollution, but also other critical aspects including biodiversity conservation, socio-economic development, alternative livelihoods, and multi-stakeholder and multi-agency involvement using an ecosystem approach.

6. The Conference noted the many achievements and substantive progress in the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution, and that the ASEAN's framework provides a good basis for enhancing coordination and forging partnership in the region.

7. There is much greater cooperation among ASEAN Member Countries including cross border mobilisation of resources to mitigate fires. Emphasis is increasingly placed on prevention rather than suppression, with monitoring continuing to play an important role in both aspects. There has also been greater emphasis for targeted activities on the ground, with the involvement of the local community. However, challenges including eradicating poverty and balancing short-term commercial interests with long-term sustainable development goals need to be addressed.

8. Coordinated efforts at regional, national and local levels should be continued and multi-stakeholder participation should be further promoted. There is also a need to promote greater inter-agency, inter-sectoral and programme coordination in the region.

9. The ASEAN Peatland Management Strategy serves as a good example of addressing the underlying causes, while promoting the ecosystem approach towards multi-stakeholder participation, inter-agency and inter-sectoral coordination. The strategy also provides entry points for all relevant stakeholders to be involved in the implementation of the strategy based on partners' interests and mandate at the community, site-level, country, sub-regional and regional levels.

10. The Conference noted the proposal for the establishment of an International Support Group for ASEAN to disseminate and reach out to

regional and international partners. Such mechanisms should build upon the institutional structures in ASEAN.

11. International efforts such as the proposed “Fire Management Code”, which is being developed under the auspices of FAO, are useful to galvanise the international community’s interests and efforts, and to strengthen activities at the national and regional levels.

12. The Conference supported the proposal for ASEAN Member Countries in the Mekong Region to intensify cooperation to address land and forest fire through the formation of a Sub-Regional Group on Transboundary Haze Pollution for the region. Particular attention will be given to sharing of best practices and techniques, providing alternatives to use of fires for shifting cultivation.

13. The Conference stressed the importance of further disseminating controlled burning practices and alternatives for shifting cultivation for the local community, as well as promoting zero burning practices for commercial purposes. Community-based fire management efforts such as development of community fire brigades, providing incentives and livelihood options for the local community to control open burning practices, disseminating techniques on alternatives to using fires need to be further intensified.

14. The Conference noted that currently resources made available are short-term and project-based, while far more resources are committed for fire suppression and emergency purposes rather than for preventive efforts. Strategies should be developed to mobilise and channel resources to support preventive and mitigation measures that are more long-term in nature. Innovative financing options, including micro-credit financing, market-based instruments, and carbon-related financing should be explored.

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