

Project:	Reinforcing Asia-Europe Cooperation on Climate Change
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Author:	Le Huong
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Asia, Europe talk environment

Lê Hương

JEJU, RoK — Climate change and its fallouts are controversial issues concerning people throughout the world.

This is also the main topic of a 2-day roundtable, entitled Reinforcing Asia-Europe Co-operation on Climate Change, which began in South Korea's Jeju island yesterday.

Some 50 educators, scientists, economists and politicians from 17 Asian and European countries gathered to debate key questions concerning both continents and identify the various areas where co-operation could bring needed results.

"The climate change [debate] is now at a highly critical juncture with the potential to either move forward or leap backward 10 years," Richard Kinley, acting Deputy Executive Secretary of the UN Climate Change Secretariat told the meeting.

March 21, 2004 marked the 10th anniversary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, he said. This year will offer the almost 190 parties to the convention, and all participants in the climate change process, an opportunity to reflect on progress achieved and on what remains to be done to achieve the convention's objective.

Its goal of returning the greenhouse gas emissions of developed countries to their 1990 levels by

2000 was indeed achieved for those countries as a whole. However, for most individual countries, emissions of greenhouse gases are now increasing.

"While we have no official data for developing countries' emissions, sources indicate a sharply rising trend from 1990 to 2000: an increase of 30-40 per cent, which contributes about 40 per cent of global emissions," he said.

Atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, a key measure of long term success, have increased about 5 per cent in the past decade.

Việt Nam's involvement

Việt Nam's National Assembly ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1994 and the Kyoto Protocol in 2002.

The country has been implementing its obligations to lessen greenhouse gas emissions besides other activities to juxtapose Clean Development Mechanisms (CDM) with the socio-economic development of the country.

In a report sent to the meeting, Phạm Khánh Toàn, director of Electricity of Việt Nam (EVN)'s Institute of Energy, said that CDM is still a new concept for the country's development planners and policy makers.

The lack of organisational mechanisms and institutional and legal frameworks, and financing bases and the centralised imple-

mentation are the main barriers to introducing CDMs, the report said.

In 1993, Việt Nam's greenhouse emissions measured 103.8 million tonnes CO2 equivalent.

Toàn forecast in his report that in 2010-20, the energy sector would produce the maximum emissions while agriculture would be next in the list.

Thus the need for the Clean Development Mechanism to focus on the energy sector in its different stages – exploitation, treatment, processing, transport, conversion, distribution and end-use.

Urgent need

"More and more people are coming to understand that mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change is a vast undertaking that will require a sustained effort for decades to come," Kinley said, "There are many things to be done. Given the impact of climate change on human activities and on the ecosystems that support life on earth, action by governments, business, civil society organisations and individuals is urgently needed... for a sustainable future."

The Jeju roundtable is the second of its type held this year within the framework of the Asia Europe Forum, which is organised by the Asia Europe Foundation, Hanns Seidel Foundation of Germany, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies of Japan and United Nations Environmental Programme. — VNS