SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS FOR ASIA AND EUROPE: DELIVERY OPTIONS FOR THE 2030 AGENDA
CONFERENCE REPORT

19-20 OCTOBER 2016 | STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN
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About the Asia-Europe Environment Forum

Established in 2003, the Asia-Europe Environment Forum (ENVforum) is a partnership of the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF); ASEM SMEs Eco-Innovation Center (ASEIC); the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) in cooperation with the Stockholm Environment Institute Asia (SEI); the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF); and the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES). During the first decade of its operation, the ENVforum organised over 50 high-level international meetings, roundtables, conferences and workshops, bringing together over 1,200 selected participants from government, ministries, academia, international organisations, NGOs and civil society and also authored seven prominent publications.

The ENVforum aims to foster inter-regional cooperation between Asia and Europe on sustainable development and its environmental dimensions. To support such collaboration, the ENVforum aims to provide a multi-stakeholder platform for knowledge-sharing, capacity building, to offer up-to-date information for policy makers and partner organisations on environmental themes, and to contribute to the formulation of sound political decisions that are mindful of their environmental impacts.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Since 2013, the ENVforum has been actively engaged in the global discussion surrounding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were adopted by the UN Member States in the UN Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015. The ENVforum was given its mandate by the ASEM Summit in Vientiane, Lao PDR in November 2012. Going beyond its traditional format, the ENVforum launched a program to contribute to the bottom-up process that supports the implementation and monitoring of SDGs by providing Asian and European countries with key insights into sustainable development planning. The program is based on three pillars:

- It undertakes research on SDGs and their associated indicators;
- It organises knowledge-hub meetings of experts working on SDGs and indicators as well as on the Green Economy; and
- It disseminates the outcomes of consultations to policy makers.

Multi-stakeholder cooperation between international organisations, governments, businesses and the civil society will be required to address a variety of implementation challenges translating the SDGs into reality. The ENVforum provides a platform for such multi-stakeholder cooperation to take place and supports global discussions with insights gained from its research on SDGs.
Asia-Europe Environment Forum Conference 2016

The ENVforum held a two-day conference entitled, “Sustainable Development Goals for Asia and Europe: Delivery Options for the 2030 Agenda.” for various stakeholders from Asia and Europe working on implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This conference was held on 19-20 October 2016 in Stockholm, Sweden and was co-organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) and the Bangkok office of the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) with the support of the ENVforum consortium. The conference covered aspects of the implementation of SDGs related to financing, multi-stakeholder cooperation, government coordination, and monitoring.

This report offers an overview of the most pressing challenges in the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals for Asia and Europe as discussed during the conference, as well as providing a summary of the conference proceedings.

Welcome Remarks

Ms. Kamilla LINDSTRÖM, ASEF Governor for Sweden and Deputy Director, Department for Promotion of Sweden and CSR, Ministry of Foreign Affairs began her opening remarks by welcoming participants as a representative of the ASEF Board of Governors. She highlighted that the SDGs were a monumental achievement and the result of negotiations over many years. She elaborated that the question now was how to implement the goals. Ms. Lindström shared one idea from Sweden on SDG 4. Education is the basis for achieving sustainability, as children become adults to take informed decisions about their lives and the environment around them. Sweden’s #FirstGeneration initiative built on the importance of teachers around the world, engaging children in learning about the SDGs and helping children become the first generation. Ms. Lindström concluded her remarks by stressing that children would be the first generation to create a sustainable future, and translating words into action.

Mr. Måns NILSSON, Deputy Director and Research Director, Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) began his remarks with an overview of the work of SEI in pursuing sustainable development and research to support policymaking in this field. He explained that the idea of the SDGs reflected a new insight about human impact on the environment and that over the last few years, we have realised how dependent we are on the environment for our prosperity. The new level of global interdependence is also reflected in the SDGs – countries depend on each other for survival, and it is no longer meaningful to put countries into generic categories – there are elements of poverty and prosperity in all countries. This was embodied in the language of the SDGs in “integrated approach” and
“ universality.” Mr. Nilsson concluded his remarks by outlining the work of SEI in this area, highlighting its involvement in the Independent Research Forum with IGES, and its work in the Asia through its office in Bangkok.

Mr. Hideyuki MORI, President, Institute for Global and Environmental Strategies (IGES) provided the opening remarks on behalf of IGES, and highlighted what a critical year 2016 was regarding SDGs and the Paris Agreement placed on a high level in the political agenda. He then went on to provide an example of what countries in Asia were doing to implement the SDGs and the Paris Agreement through Japan’s experience. Japan had served as the chair of the G7 Summit, and raised awareness on the SDGs among the public, and established a ministerial taskforce to get started with implementing the SDGs. The Japanese Ministry of Environment were also in dialogues with various stakeholders and planned to integrate the SDGs into the national environment action plan in 2017. Mr. Mori concluded his remarks by noting the platform that this conference provided to meet and discuss how the SDGs could be implemented in a very effective manner.

Introductory Session

Ms. Grazyna PULAWSKA, Project Manager, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) provided an overview of the 2-day conference programme. The first day of the conference would focus on potential action plans that different stakeholder groups from academia, business, youth, and civil society could take in supporting the implementation of the SDGs. This would be conducted in 4 parallel working groups, where members of each stakeholder group could gather to discuss possible ideas on SDGs implementation. Day 2 would begin with a special panel on gender as a cross-cutting issue in the SDGs, and then would build on the findings of the first day to discuss government coordination in implementation and monitoring to achieve the translation from a commitment to action and, ultimately, results. Ms. Pulawska encouraged participants to be active during the conference to ensure the exchange of knowledge among different regions on the important topic of SDGs.

Asia-Europe Environment (ENVforum) and its involvement in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The conference began with an overview of ENVforum’s research and capacity building trainings in supporting governments in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs therein. This session was designed to provide a brief introduction to the SDGs and the governance, monitoring, and financing aspects of their implementation.

Ms. Dara LEE, Project Officer, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) provided an overview of the ENVforum’s work in supporting policymakers in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development since 2013. She began with an overview of the work of the ENVforum in capacity building and research for the Sustainable Development Goals. The capacity building workshops were designed to support ministry officials in getting started with understanding and implementing the SDGs into national development planning, and the research on goal methodology, measuring progress, financing options, 2 national case studies on SDGs’ implementation, and an overview guide on implementation were designed to provide additional references in this process. Ms. Lee then provided some interesting case studies to illustrate where countries were in implementing SDGs regarding governance and monitoring and showcased the Implementation Guide for the SDGs as a useful reference for various country case studies as examples to show how selected countries began with
implementing SDGs.

Ms. Dora ALMASSY, Researcher, Central European University provided an overview of one of ENVforum’s research projects, *Who Will Pay for the Sustainable Development Goals*. She explained it covered different sources of financing potentially available for the implementation of the SDGs. Key messages from the publication included the need to make priorities among the SDG targets, and to conduct a realistic assessment of the costs of SDG implementation. She also explained that ODA would remain an important part of the financing, but that it would be most effective to use it as a catalyst to attract other sources of funding from a variety of sources (e.g. private international, domestic, public international, blended finance, etc.). Ms. Almassy also highlighted that at the domestic level, tax system reform would be an efficient tool in ensuring sustainable development, such as internationalisation of environmental externalities, the introduction of new kinds of taxes, and the removal or reduction of harmful subsidies. The key message elaborated on the need to explore savings managed by primary institutional investors in mobilising additional resources, such as pension funds and insurance companies. Ms. Almassy concluded her presentation by highlighting the message that countries need to be smart and creative about financing SDGs and find innovative ways of doing so.

**Experts Commentary**

Experts in the field of sustainable development were invited to respond to the presentations on the ENVforum’s activities on the 2030 Agenda.

H.E. Dr. Paris CHUOP, Deputy Secretary-General, National Council for Sustainable Development, Ministry of Environment, Cambodia provided his input on the ENVforum’s work and his experience working with the ENVforum in capacity building trainings. He explained that he found the *Implementation Guide for the SDGs* very useful, in overcoming Cambodia’s biggest challenges in implementing the SDGs would be institutional capacity and financing. With regards to capacity, Dr. Chuop explained that there was more assistance needed in the implementation of the Cambodian SDGs (CSDGs) and monitoring them along the way. With financing, he explained that public finance was limited in Cambodia, and there was a heavy reliance on ODA. Dr. Chuop explained that there would be more efforts to get the private sector involved, along with innovative financing solutions such as carbon credit schemes.

Prof. Laszlo PINTER, Central European University & Senior Fellow and Associate, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) provided his thoughts on financing the SDGs. He elaborated that SDG financing did not have to be limited to conventional forms of development aid (“observable universe”), but should include innovations from the private and public sectors (“black matter”). There is plenty of investment in financial capital but not enough in the social or natural capital, mechanisms need to be set to rebalance investment, and the SDG indicators are a good metric to quantify social and natural capital. Prof. Pinter agreed on the importance of
prioritising among the SDG targets, but also stressed that the SDGs form a system of interrelated targets and that synergies and trade-offs would be important to take into consideration. Prof. Pinter concluded his remarks with an elaboration on the importance of education, and that a change in mindset regarding the various types of capital would be important.

**Prof. Suh-Yong CHUNG, Division of International Studies, Korea University** shared his insight on the nexus between climate change and SDGs, and how cross-cutting climate issues were in all of the goals. He stated that a similarity between the 2 parallel processes was their universal applicability, and how taking a bottom-up approach reflected the shift from regulation to promoting the market. The UNFCCC 5-year review, for example, provided an opportunity to develop a 5-year low-carbon development plan. Prof. Chung raised some points on the implementation and financing of SDGs, including the importance of adapting strategies to the national context, government coordination, building political commitment, setting specific targets, public and private financing, and applying market principles for technology transfer. Prof. Chung concluded his remarks that there are good opportunities in the SDGs, and that the conference would be a good forum to discuss these opportunities in detail.

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**Thematic Roundtables on the Role of Different Stakeholders in SDGs Implementation**

Thematic Roundtables each began with a series of input presentations (around 10 minutes) from invited Speakers. The objective of the Roundtables was to promote interaction between the audience and speakers to gather action points on how different stakeholders could contribute to the implementation of the SDGs.

**Roundtable 1: Bridging Science and Policymaking** focused on the role of academia and natural/social scientists in supporting the implementation of the SDGs. It included input presentations from eminent faculty from universities in Asia and Europe, as well as research institutions.

As the session moderator, **Dr. Jong Soo YOON, Head of Office, United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD)** highlighted the importance of the science-policy interface and discussed it would be important to promote science, technology and innovation (STI) on national, regional, and local levels.

**Prof. Laszlo PINTER, Central European University & International Institute for Sustainable Development** provided his insights on the role of science in systems analysis of interrelated SDG targets and in envisioning future options and transition pathways from monitoring progress. Prof. Pinter highlighted the importance of capacity building of scientific institutions and combining traditional types of science with other forms of knowledge systems. Science would need to be receptive and understanding of the needs of policymakers, and integrate communication and outreach to make findings accessible for non-experts.

**Prof. Suh-Yong CHUNG, Division of International Studies, Korea University** provided case studies of good multi-stakeholder partnerships through examples of the IPCC, Catalyst, New Climate Initiative in Mexico, the Deep...
Decarbonization Pathways Project, and the Global Green Growth Institute. All of these examples provided a selection of best practices in the science-policy interface, and that this interface was a natural process of integration, as opposed to an imposed regulation.

Mr. Shane QUINN, Senior Project Manager, Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) provided his experience in the Independent Research Forum (IRF), which includes 5 members from the global north, and 5 from the south. The IRF created a platform for governments to come out of their country representations to discuss universality and transformation of the 2030 Agenda. The IRF provided important lessons in national ownership of the SDGs, harmonisation, internalisation, and integrating the SDGs in existing policies.

Dr. Surichai WUN’GAEQ, Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, Chulalongkorn University noted his hope that the 2030 Agenda would lead to positive change, and not end up measuring indicators without going into the context of difficult livelihood issues and policy debates. To this end, he stressed the importance of placing the SDGs and indicators in the environmental, social, and security of the planet, building peace and trust between and within nations, going beyond national representations to a recognition of a shared planet, addressing transboundary issues, and sharing the benefits of globalisation in a more balanced manner.

Discussions that ensued covered topics related to the need to balance independence of science and academia with producing useful research for policymakers, STI capacity building, knowledge exchange fora, and the ethics of sustainability science.

Roundtable 2: Role of Business in Making SDGs Happen focused on the role that the private sector can play in supporting the implementation of the SDGs. It included presentations from leaders in corporate sustainability and responsibility, as well as international business associations.

As the session moderator, Mr. Thierry SCHWARZ, Lecturer, Sciences Po noted that the global commitment to sustainable development had changed the way that businesses operate, and that a common reporting framework would be important to streamline sustainability.
Mr. Tim HILL, Research Director, Eco-Business shared outcomes from a survey conducted by Eco-Business to get a sense of what sustainability means in businesses around the world. European businesses were somewhat more advanced in sustainability practices compared to other regions. He also noted that the banking sector did not encounter much demand for sustainability activities and that CEOs were more likely than line managers to say that sustainability was embedded throughout their operations. Mr. Hill highlighted that aligning CSR policies with the SDGs would be helpful for businesses to conduct sustainable operations.

Ms. Malin RIPA, Senior Vice President CSR Management, Volvo Group suggested that the private sector has much to contribute to translating commitments to action. She stated that in the transport sector, products are purchased as long-term investments, and thus it is important to align businesses to the SDGs, which represent long-term principles. She also noted that the SDGs offer an opportunity for more harmonised monitoring and that companies could contribute data in this endeavour. Ms. Ripa also explained that the Volvo Group targeted Goals 9, 11, 13, and Target 3.6 as priority areas of contribution. Moving forward, Ms. Ripa concluded that Volvo would provide their core products, put requirements on suppliers, participate in PPPs, and work with policymakers to support the SDGs.

Ms. Susanna ZEKO, Director of Policy, ICC Sweden & Focal Point, Global Compact Nordic Network stated that trade is a critical contribution from businesses to SDG implementation, as it is significant in its potential to conduct sustainable operations and create jobs for growth. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda places trade as an enabler of sustainable growth. Ms. Zeko added that trade can also help countries gain access to environmental goods and that urgent action would be needed to restore the global growth of trade.

Roundtable discussions that ensued covered the role of businesses in supporting data collection for SDG monitoring, how first-mover companies can promote sustainability on a critical mass scale and achieve sector-wide transformation, and the role of international trade in the implementation of SDGs.

Roundtable 3: Youth Involvement in Implementing SDGs discussed the role of young people in supporting SDG implementation. It included panellists from youth organisations, academia, youth entrepreneurs, and volunteer organisations.

As the session moderator, Ms. Dara LEE, Project Officer, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) introduced the session with the fact that half the world population is under the age of 30, and that some the SDGs targets relate specifically to youth involvement and welfare. Therefore, it would be important to discuss how youth could get involved.
Ms. Romiana BIKASHA, Swedish Youth Representative to the UN HLPF explained that her affiliation with the National Council of Swedish Youth Organisations (LSU), a Swedish organisation that supports its member youth organisations, which attended the HLPF to spread knowledge to member organisations on different spaces for youth to get involved. Ms. Bikasha provided examples of LSU member organisations’ work on SDGs, e.g. YMCA collaboration on promoting peacebuilding and empowerment amongst youth, and role of Nature in Youth Sweden in advocating sustainability.

Mr. Balázs KAJOR, Service Civil International (SCI) provided insights on youth volunteering that he gained through Service Civil International (SCI). He shared a case study of the Climate for Peace campaign, which included trainings on how to lead volunteering projects in a sustainable manner. Mr. Kajor also showcased SCI’s toolkit on how to organise sustainable international short-term voluntary projects (“workcamps”) and elaborated on the beneficial influence of volunteering for the individuals, community, and society.

Dr. Nursalwa BAHARUDDIN, Lecturer & Marine Ecologist, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu showcased examples of:
- Educating youth in Goals 13 (climate action) and 14 (life below water) through her involvement with ASEF University programme’s to decrease plastic bag usage and,
- Universiti Malaysia Terengganu’s initiative to involve local schools and communities in conserving the sea turtle population.

She concluded that education could empower youth to become tomorrow’s leaders, thus highlighting the importance of encouraging active youth involvement through effective communications and adequate funding.

Mr. Dejan BOJANIC, Board Member, European Youth Forum said that more could be done to create avenues for youth to get involved in the regional/national level. He explained that globally, young people are involved in the SDGs process through the Major Group for Children and Youth. Regionally, the UNECE has informally communicated with CSOs, but don’t have modalities for systematic input of youths, as compared to UNESCAP. Nationally, there is often no formal mechanism for youth to be involved in the SDGs process. Mr. Bojanic elaborated on European Youth Forum efforts in the capacity training of youth to become more politically engaged and to showcase impactful youth initiatives to governments.

Ms. Staycie DOMZALSKI, Consultant in Climate Change, Energy and Water spoke on youth entrepreneurship and explained that many young people were creating their companies. She explained that there were an increasing number of platforms, networks, and recognition awards for youth engaged in entrepreneurship linked to the SDGs.

Ms. Domzalski also shared a study conducted by Ernst & Young that a large percentage of youth start-ups were focused on “doing well by doing good,” motivated by achieving social change, as opposed to a solely monetary focus.

Discussions that ensued covered ideas on how to increase youth involvement in the SDGs, such as through education, giving young people a role in notable organisations, and providing funding and resources for such involvement.

Roundtable 4: Civil Society Involvement in SDGs discussed the role that civil society organisations (CSOs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can play in supporting the implementation of the SDGs.

As the session moderator, Ms. Grazyna PULAWSKA, Project Manager, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) remarked that civil society is one of the key group that can enable making SDGs work and accelerate its implementation on the national level. She said, that CSOs had a critical role to play and support interlinkages between different actors instrumental to SDGs success.

Ms. Ella ANTONIO, President, Earth Council Asia-Pacific began by illustrating a new paradigm in the activities of government, civil society, and businesses, with more interaction between these groups. She noted the explosion in the size and number of CSOs over the past few years, a broadening in scope and diversity of their focus, and how
CSOs have become more accepted and established in global and national governance processes. Ms. Antonio proceeded to explain opportunities in the evolution of CSOs, including ICT, social and mobile media in facilitating new spaces and ways of influencing processes. She also provided several examples of civil society resistance movements in addressing societal challenges.

Mr. Janos ZLINSZKY, Director, Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC) provided his insights into the role that CSOs can play in demystifying the volume and complexity of the SDGs. He explained that CSOs are operating on equal footing with governments and that there are action groups and pressure groups, providing natural balance in the civil society mechanism. He noted that because CSOs have become powerful players, this could potentially jeopardise the legitimacy of CSOs as traditional advocates of the weak, necessitating transparency of funding and governance systems of CSOs and NGOs. He also noted that traditional roles of government, NGOs, and international organisations were to be redefined.

Dr. Smriti DAS, Associate Professor, The Energy and Resources Institute University elaborated on the challenges and opportunities in India’s achievements in the MDGs and ongoing work in the SDGs, and the role of CSOs in this context. She provided a number of examples that showed changes in the socio-political context with enhanced opportunities and participation for civil society in various development initiatives. She noted that CSOs represent inherent closeness to the population, and the importance of institutionalising dialogue spaces for their inclusion. Dr. Das highlighted the example of the NITI Aayog (policy think-tank headed by PM) engaging in dialogue with CSOs. She emphasised that CSOs could have a huge role in monitoring and ensuring accountability, and in establishing partnerships for data collection, sharing and analysis.

Mr. M.S. SEMBIRING, Executive Director, KEHATI, Indonesia Biodiversity Foundation provided an introduction to KEHATI and its involvement in supporting the SDGs. Mr. Sembiring highlighted its involvement in promoting sustainable investment through the SRI-KEHATI index, which supports green investment by screening companies in Indonesia for sustainable practices to provide guidance for investors. He noted its importance in supporting Goal 12 (SCP) by providing guidance and training for companies and strengthening listing requirements. He noted that the SRI-KEHATI index had consistently outperformed the market by 10%, and shared the screening process in assessing the core business, financial aspects, and fundamental aspects of Indonesian companies.
Discussions that followed covered opportunities in SDG financing through CSOs, media coverage and public interest in CSO initiatives, and the nature of the partnership between CSOs and other stakeholders in implementing SDGs.

**Gender Equality Spotlight – Cross-Cutting Theme for the Implementation of SDGs**

The following day of the conference began with a special panel on gender as a cross-cutting theme in all 17 of the SDGs. Speakers were invited to share their insights into supporting the welfare of women and women’s rights.

Ms. Maria LEE, Core Associate – Rural Development/Gender, Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture & Natural Resource Management (WOCAN) introduced gender was integral to the success of the SDGs. She provided data to illustrate the linkages in gender equality and growth – e.g. giving a woman the same access to resources as men would increase food production, and that the Asia-Pacific region was losing $42-48 billion annually due to women’s limited access to employment. She highlighted the importance of measuring the value of women’s contributions in ensuring women have the opportunity to engage in productive practices. Ms. Lee introduced WOCAN’s W+ standard, a mechanism to assess the impact of projects. Women benefits units (W+ units) are measured in 6 areas – time, education/knowledge, income/assets, leadership, health, and food security. The units are then valued and sold to bring revenue to give back to women’s groups involved in the project in question. Ms. Lee concluded that it would be important to value women’s contributions, and noted the possibility to integrate these W+ standards with other standards (e.g. carbon offsets).

Ms. Tasneem KAKAL, Junior Advisor – Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights, Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) shared key considerations for promoting sexual reproductive health rights (SRHR) among women. She discussed that SRHR links to other SDGs – for example, reducing 40% of teenage pregnancies can lead to a 25% reduction of carbon emissions. She stressed that gender equality is at the heart of SRHR, and that power dynamics are central to this issue. Another aspect of the issue that Ms. Kakal elaborated on was using humans as a means for other goals – she highlighted the importance of acknowledging women’s rights as a human right. Ms. Kakal also emphasised the importance of reconciling research and policy, and moving away from politicised discussions and towards evidence-based policymaking. Ms. Kakal noted that projects that target women should not forget to include marginalised groups, which would require a different set of policies and interventions.

The moderator of the session, Mr. Thierry SCHWARZ, Lecturer, Sciences Po moderated discussions, which covered the ethics associated with legal intervention in harmful cultural practices, and addressing power dynamics in women’s empowerment.

**SDGs Coordination and National Implementation Challenges**

This session provided an opportunity for policymakers from Asia and Europe to share their experiences regarding preparation to implement the SDGs, especially in matters related to establishing inter-sectoral, inter-ministerial coordination in the SDGs implementation process.

H.E. Ms. Kajsa B. OLOFGÅRD, Post-2015 Ambassador, Sweden noted that Sweden would take a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to implementing the SDGs. Regarding government coordination, H.E. Ms. Olofgård elaborated that inter-ministerial coordination would fall under the leadership of the PM, ensuring high-level political commitment. She went on to discuss Sweden’s relaunch of the “Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development” (2002), which would be a useful tool in mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda into national policy. In terms of international cooperation, H.E. Ms. Olofgård explained Sweden’s support for a 1% of GNI contribution from
developed countries, and cooperation with international bodies. She also mentioned that government agencies were going to conduct a gap analysis for the achievement of the SDG targets in Sweden. H.E. Ms. Olofsgård went on to elaborate on the inter-ministerial mechanisms within government to be established, and noted that a similar multi-stakeholder committee would support efforts towards the whole-of-society approach.

Mr. NGUYEN Thang, Deputy Director General, Institute of Strategy and Policy on. Natural Resources and Environment (ISPONRE) Viet Nam provided insight into how Viet Nam went about setting up coordination in government to implement the SDGs. He began with an overview of Viet Nam’s experience with the MDGs, and how MDG 7 (environmental sustainability) had not been achieved. He stated that environmental SDG targets would thus be more highly prioritised moving forward, especially those under SDG 12 and 13, to 2020. Mr. Nguyen explained that the Ministry of Planning and Investment was the focal point agency to create an action plan for SDG implementation, and noted that it would be beneficial to move beyond fragmented strategies (e.g. Viet Nam carries out work in water (SDG 6), SCP (SDG 12), and climate change (SDG 13) as separate strategies, instead of an integrated approach. Mr. Nguyen concluded his remarks by talking about the challenges and opportunities in Viet Nam’s work with the SDGs. Opportunities included the success of its work with the MDGs, and successes with regional and international integration. Challenges included reduction of ODA due to LMIC status and depleting natural capital. Mr. Nguyen concluded by stating the government’s commitment to mobilising resources for SDGs.

Ms. Eili LEPIK, Advisor on Sustainable Development Issues, Strategy Unit, Government Office, Estonia began by introducing Estonia’s previous experience with SD policymaking, dating back to 1995. She noted that the SDGs were to be implemented through sectoral plans and government strategies. The monitoring would be renewed every two years with a comprehensive statistics report. Ms. Lepik explained the coordinating mechanisms put in place to implement the goals were mainly coordinated by the Government Office, and that having horizontal strategies come from one unit helped with overseeing coordination. Ms. Lepik shared an another example of a mechanism for horizontal coherence – the Inter-Ministerial Working Group. The Estonian SD Commission, a multi-stakeholder body that provides policy recommendations and specialised reports. She then proceeded to share her experience in submitting the voluntary report to the HLPF, which was useful in getting started with mapping the existing actions and how they match with SDGs. Ms. Lepik concluded by outlining strengths and challenges in the Estonian development experience to be addressed with the implementation of SDGs.

Mr. Ryuzo SUGIMOTO, Deputy Director of the International Cooperation Office, Ministry of Environment, Japan introduced the current state of SDGs implementation in Japan. He noted that basic environmental laws were adopted in 1993 after the Rio summit, so the environmental aspects of the idea were already integrated into the policymaking. For inter-ministerial cooperation, all ministries attend Steering Committees, where just recently, they updated a draft of the Implementation Guiding Principles as open for review by the public. The Ministry of Environment also set up a stakeholders meeting to set up pioneering practices for stakeholder groups to support the environment. It was launched this year with a focus on SDG 12 (SCP).
Mr. Sugimoto also shared some examples of Japanese companies that had supported SDG issues, such as Itochu trading company and Sompo Japan. He concluded that Japan had existing targets and indicators and that while this may make prioritising targets easier, it would be a challenge to mainstream the SDG indicators to an existing and different indicator set.

Dr. Ingeborg NIFESTROY, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) & Public Strategy for Sustainable Development moderated discussions, which covered the issue of raising awareness in promoting bottom-up ownership of the 2030 Agenda, prioritisation among SDG targets, as well as the role of governance, can play in SDGs implementation and issues that governance reform alone could not address.

Follow-up and Review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Smart Data Management

This session served as a natural continuation of the previous session to discuss what country governments were doing with the 230 SDG indicators to measure progress in the attainment of the SDGs. Statisticians and other representatives from statistical agencies were invited to share their insights into their respective regional/national endeavours in monitoring the SDGs.

Ms. Katrin SEUSS, Project Manager – Partnerships and Networks, European Environment Agency (EEA) shared the EEA’s reflections on monitoring the environmental dimension of SDGs. She introduced the EU’s 7th Environmental Action Programme, which adopts the principles of all 11 SDGs with strong or medium environmental dimensions. Ms. Seuss mentioned that there is ongoing work by the EU in their strategy for achieving the SDGs and that on the monitoring front, a publication by Eurostat would be released on the first statistical guidance and initial baseline assessment on Europe’s current position with respect to the SDGs. Ms. Seuss elaborated that there is work ongoing for developing a regional set of indicators with selected priority indicators from the global SDG indicator list. Ms. Seuss then outlined EEA’s involvement in the monitoring process, and illustrated that it was contributing to Eurostat’s work on the global SDG indicator list, supporting building on existing information systems in Europe and providing EEA assessments as data sources. Ms. Seuss also shared how the EEA had conducted a mapping exercise to assess existing data sources for the SDG indicators/targets.

Ms. Wilma GUILLEN, Assistant National Statistician for Social Sector Statistics, Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) explained that in the Philippines, much had been done to create national ownership of the SDGs, such as raising awareness among local government, students and academia, as well as businesses and media networks. Ms. Guillen also shared Philippines’ creation of an oversight committee on SDGs, integration of the SDGs in the 10-point social agenda of the new administration, and the creation of the Medium-Term Philippines Development Plan (PDP), under which the Statistical Development Plan was integrated with the SDG indicators in mind. She also mentioned the creation of the oversight committee for SDGs involving ministries and other stakeholders, which would be provided with a secretariat to monitor progress, consult with CSOs, and review the country’s achievements in SDG implementation. For the technical monitoring aspect, Ms. Guillen explained that multisectoral workshops on SDGs...
were held to assess the SDG indicators on their data availability, an organisation responsible for implementation, and relevance to the PDP. Findings included: the Philippines classified 41% of the indicators as having ready methodology and data, 35% of indicators are in the PDP. Moving forward, Ms. Guillen said that the PSA would be working to develop multi-dimensional poverty indicators, conduct a pilot survey on gender, and explore the possibility of 3rd data sources.

Mr. Ari TYRKÖ, Head of Co-ordination and International Activities, Statistics Finland stated that Finland has a long tradition of sustainable development policies and that the leadership of the SDGs process in Finland was provided by the Prime Minister. The National Commission on sustainable development would work to involve government, businesses, and CSOs. Other groups involved in the SDGs included those in the political side (e.g. Development Policy Committee) and those in the academic side (e.g. SD Expert Panel). Mr. Tyrkkö also discussed that the 8 Finnish National Sustainable Development Goals integrated aspects of the SDGs and reflected Finland’s prioritisation. He also shared an innovative initiative from Finland called “Society’s Commitment to SD,” which invited companies, municipalities, hospitals, schools, etc. to make one practical change in their present activities to advance the SDGs, resulting in 500 commitments, which is planned to reach 10,000 by the end of 2017. Mr. Tyrkkö then shared Finland’s start with the SDG indicators, in mapping the availability of data for SDG indicators, and conducting a gap analysis. He also shared the “Findicator” initiative, an online tool with about 100 indicators, the concept of which could be used also for SDG reporting.

Mr. Dinh Khuyen NGUYEN, Deputy Director, Statistical Standards, Methodologies and IT Department, General Statistics Office (GSO) Viet Nam illustrated strengths of the Vietnamese statistical system, in its inclusion of 33 indicators from the global indicator list, as well as the Viet Nam Statistical Development Strategy 2011-2020. He explained that there is data available for 90 global SDGs indicators, and that monitoring was divided between the Central Statistic Organization (CSO) and the Sectoral Statistics Organization. Mr. Nguyen outlined the preparations that Viet Nam was taking in SDG monitoring, including regulating statistical tools (state and non-state statistics), as well as assessing data collection methods. In Viet Nam, the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) coordinates SDG implementation, and any line ministry can introduce an indicator to the system after it is assessed by the CSO. Moving forward, Mr. Nguyen outlined that Viet Nam would strengthen its national statistical capacity and data collection (administrative data, surveys, etc.) and build the indicator framework to monitor Viet Nam’s Action Plan for SDG Implementation. Challenges and constraints moving forward included higher demand for data but limited capacity and skills statistical analysis and forecasting, difficulties in collaboration between statistical agencies in ministries, and uncertainties in methodology.

The moderator of the session, Prof. Laszlo PINTER, Central European University & Senior Fellow and Associate, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) moderated discussions, which included capacity building to address gaps found in monitoring, the importance of disaggregated data to reflect different realities in regions, institutional processes in monitoring, policy integration and coordination, multi-stakeholder cooperation, analysing non-statistical indicators for SDGs, and how to integrate monitoring into the commons.
Experts’ Panel on SDGs’ Implementation – Beyond 2015: Delivery Options for SDGs

The session aimed to highlight and discuss ways to move forward in delivering the SDGs on a national and global level. It served as a final session to discuss themes and challenges that emerged from the duration of the conference.

Ms. Ulla ANDRÉN, Department for Asia, Middle East and Humanitarian Assistance, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) began her presentation with the “wedding cake” to sustainable development, implying that economies and societies are embedded parts of the biosphere, thus necessitating an integrated logic in sustainable development delivery. Ms. Andrén discussed Sida’s attempt to engage with different stakeholder groups in SDG implementation, and its commitment to promoting human rights through perspectives on not only development, but also on the poverty, and those deprived of social and cultural rights and facing discrimination. She also discussed the importance of addressing climate change, and how it would disproportionately affect poor people and the achievement of the goals. She stressed the need for coherent, participatory and adaptive policies for climate resilience and creating a liveable environment. Another point she highlighted was that of gender equality and the integration of perspectives in conflict prevention, explaining that without peace, there can be no development.

Ms. Sisavanh DIDARAVONG, Department of Planning, Ministry of Planning and Investment, Lao PDR provided insight into Lao PDR’s efforts in implementing SDGs. She made mention of some policy documents relevant to the 2030 Agenda, but highlighted in particular Vision 2030 (10-year development strategy) and the 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP) (5-year development plan with the overall objective of LDC graduation by 2020). As the coordinating body, the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) has different functional departments in planning (inter-ministerial coordination), statistics (data and monitoring), cooperation development (development partners), etc. Ms. Didaravong also shared Lao PDR’s adoption of an additional goal (SDG 18) on removing UXOs. She proceeded to elaborate on its process of developing a national indicator framework for SDGs, and that more than half of the indicators in the monitoring framework of the 8th NSEDP were linked to the SDG indicators. Lao PDR currently was undergoing consultations on final indicators for Lao PDR based on national capacity and affordability. Challenges in the way forward including data availability and reliability, scientific research for policy guidance, limited human resources, and matters related to financing. Moving forward, Lao PDR would focus on SDG costing for effective implementation, country analysis on priority targets for Lao PDR, capacity development in statistics and research, and mobilising more ODA and private investment.
Dr. Ingeborg NIESTROY, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) & Public Strategy for Sustainable Development stressed the integration of the economic, social, and environmental aspects of development, and that support would need to be mobilised in instances where growth is unbalanced between the 3 tracks. She also expressed hope that there would be more bi-regional peer learning constructed in the future between the EU and Asia on SDG implementation. Dr. Niestroy shared that she had looked at EU countries had how their domestic and external activities were linked, and that the SDGs were useful in bringing certain issues (e.g. unbalanced global value chains). She agreed that interlinkages between the 3 dimensions of SD is important, referring back to the “wedding cake” approach. She elaborated that the most effective way to tackle horizontal coordination would be to incorporate the feedback of various stakeholders, understanding each other from different sectors. The original idea of sustainability councils incorporating input from both government and non-government actors would need to be revitalised. Leadership and participation are two key components of the 2030 Agenda, and fostering bottom-up participation would be equally important as effective governance.

Mr. Simon Hoiberg OLSEN, Senior Policy Researcher, Institute for Global and Environmental Strategies (IGES) provided an introduction to IGES, and talked about concrete examples of principles that lie at the heart of the SDGs. Firstly, Mr. Olsen explained that SDGs were transformative in their integrated and universal approach, and that vertical integration would be important for operationalisation of the SDGs. In operationalising the integration of the three pillars of SD, it would be important to address several points of conflict in the Agenda, and that depoliticising certain issues may not be the solution to unlocking a transformative agenda. Mr. Olsen stressed the importance of national ownership in the goals, and highlighted SDG 10 (equality) and SDG 12 (SCP) as 2 of the most potentially transformative goals in the whole set. Mr. Olsen concluded his remarks by reiterating for a truly integrated set of goals, and that indicators and funding would be critical to this operationalisation. He also emphasised that it would be important to consider how to bring in the marginalised into the SDG agenda, and avoid having it dominated by old major players.

As moderator of the session, Mr. Surendra SHRESTHA, Vice President for Development, Asian Institute for Technology, Thailand moderated discussions that covered the topics of mutual exchange between Asia and Europe in achieving SDGs, accountability of SDGs through multi-stakeholder cooperation, local-level implementation, and the role of politicisation in bringing public awareness.

Conclusions of the Conference & Closing Remarks

Ms. Grazyna PULAWSKA, Project Manager, Asia-Europe Foundation thanked participants for their active input and shared that the outcomes of this conference will feed into future ENVforum programming.

Mr. Moritz MICHEL, Deputy Director, Hanns Seidel Foundation Viet Nam (HSF) explained that HSF had been active in capacity building and multi-stakeholder inclusion in the SDGs process. He expressed that the dilemma we have with the 2030 Agenda is that it has been planned and implemented by groups of people with individual agendas. Mr. Michel concluded that it is important to move now closer together, and if we garner mutual trust and respect, we can deliver the SDGs more effectively and efficiently.

Mr. Niall O’CONNOR, Asia Centre Director, Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) stressed the importance of making credible, trustworthy science more receptive to needs of the decision makers, and that the flow of information shouldn’t just be north-south. He highlighted multi-stakeholder cooperation in bringing businesses into the discussion and allowing CSOs to be a mechanism for accountability and to keep in mind gender as a cross-cutting theme in all the goals.
Ms. Younji KANG, Project Manager, ASEM SMEs Eco-Innovation Center (ASEIC) explained that ASEIC had been established to promote eco-innovation within the context of ASEM. She highlighted that eco-innovation is integral to the SDGs and that it would be important to raise awareness among SMEs about environmental matters.

Ambassador ZHANG Yan, Executive Director, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) thanked participants and noted that the conference’s aim was to find best practices to achieve the implementation of the SDGs. Though the task is challenging, combined efforts would achieve these goals.
# Conference Programme

**Day 1 – Wednesday, 19 October 2016**  
**Venue: The Brewery Conference Centre Stockholm, Sweden**

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>08:30 – 09:15</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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<tr>
<td>09:15 – 10:15</td>
<td>Welcome Remarks</td>
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<td>Ms. Kamilla LINDSTRÖM, ASEF Governor for Sweden</td>
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<td>Deputy Director, Department for Promotion of Sweden and CSR, Ministry for Foreign Affairs</td>
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<td>Mr. Måns NILSSON, Deputy Director and Research Director, Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI)</td>
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<td>Mr. Hideyuki MORI, President, Institute for Global and Environmental Strategies (IGES)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:15 – 10:30</td>
<td>Introductory Session</td>
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<td>Ms. Grazyna PULAWSKA, Project Manager, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)</td>
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<td>10:30 – 11:00</td>
<td>Coffee Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 – 11:45</td>
<td>Asia-Europe Environment (ENVforum) and its involvement in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development</td>
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<td>Delivering Sustainable Development at the National Level</td>
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<td>Ms. Dara LEE, Project Officer, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)</td>
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<td>SDGs Financing Strategies</td>
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<td>Ms. Dora ALMASSY, Researcher, Central European University</td>
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<td>11:45 – 12:30</td>
<td>Experts commentary</td>
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<td>H.E. Dr. Paris CHUOP, Deputy Secretary-General, National Council for Sustainable Development, Ministry of Environment, Cambodia</td>
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<td>Prof. Laszlo PINTER, Central European University &amp; Senior Fellow and Associate, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)</td>
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<td>Prof. Suh-Yong CHUNG, Division of International Studies, Korea University</td>
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<td>12:30 – 13:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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**Chair for the afternoon session: Ms. Grazyna PULAWSKA, Project Manager, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)**
### Introduction to Thematic Roundtables on Role of Different Stakeholders in SDGs Implementation

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>13:30 - 13:45</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to Thematic Roundtables on Role of Different Stakeholders in SDGs Implementation</strong></td>
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#### Roundtable 1: Bridging Science and Policy Making
- **Prof. Laszlo PINTER**, Central European University & International Institute for Sustainable Development
- **Prof. Suh-Yong CHUNG**, Division of International Studies, Korea University
- **Mr. Shane QUINN**, Senior Project Manager, Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI)
- **Dr. Surichai WUN'GAEAO**, Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, Chulalongkorn University
- **Moderator**: Dr. Jong Soo YOON, Head of Office, United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD)

#### Roundtable 2: Role of Business in Making SDGs Happen
- **Ms. Malin RIPA**, Senior Vice President CSR Management, Volvo Group
- **Mr. Tim HILL**, Research Director, Eco-Business
- **Ms. Susanna ZEKO**, Director of Policy, ICC Sweden & Focal Point, Global Compact Nordic Network
- **Moderator**: Mr. Thierry SCHWARZ, Lecturer, Sciences Po

### Coffee Break

**15:00 - 15:30**

### Roundtable 3: Youth Involvement in Implementing SDGs
- **Ms. Romiana BIKASHA**, Swedish Youth Representative to the UN HLPF
- **Mr. Balázs KAJOR**, Service Civil International
- **Dr. Nursalwa BAHARUDDIN**, Lecturer & Marine Ecologist, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu
- **Mr. Dejan BOJANIC**, Board Member, European Youth Forum
- **Ms. Staycie DOMZALSKI**, Consultant in Climate Change, Energy and Water
- **Moderator**: Ms. Dara LEE, Project Officer, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

### Roundtable 4: Civil Society Involvement in SDGs
- **Ms. Ella ANTONIO**, President, Earth Council Asia-Pacific
- **Mr. Janos ZLINSZKY**, Director, Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC)
- **Dr. Smriti DAS**, Associate Professor, The Energy and Resources Institute University
- **Mr. M.S.SEMBIRING**, Executive Director, KEHATI, Indonesia Biodiversity Foundation
- **Moderator**: Ms. Grazyna PULAWSKA, Project Manager, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

### Thematic Roundtables Highlights on Stakeholders’ Involvement

Rapporteurs’ Presentation on the Thematic Roundtables Discussions

**16:30 - 17:15**

### Conclusions of Day 1

**17:15 - 17:30**

### Dinner Reception at Restaurang Mynchen

**18:30 onwards**
Day 2 – Thursday, 20 October 2016  
Venue: The Brewery Conference Centre Stockholm, Sweden

Chair for the morning session: Mr. Hideyuki MORI, President, Institute for Global and Environmental Strategies (IGES)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
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<tr>
<td>09:00 – 09:05</td>
<td><strong>Rationale and Objectives of the Programme for Day 2</strong></td>
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</table>
| 09:05 – 09:30 | **Gender Equality Spotlight – Cross Cutting Theme for the Implementation of SDGs**  
Ms. Maria LEE, Core Associate – Rural Development/Gender, Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture & Natural Resource Management (WOCAN)  
Ms. Tasneem KAKAL, Junior Advisor – Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights, Royal Tropical Institute (KIT)  
Moderator: Ms. Grazyna PULAWSKA, Project Manager, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) |
| 09:30 – 11:00 | **SDGs Coordination and National Implementation Challenges**            |
|             | H.E. Ms. Kajsa B. OLOFSGÅRD, Post-2015 Ambassador, Sweden              |
|             | Mr. NGUYEN Thang, Deputy Director General, Institute of Strategy and Policy on. Natural Resources and Environment (ISPONRE) Viet Nam |
|             | Ms. Eili LEPIK, Advisor on Sustainable Development Issues, Strategy Unit, Government Office, Estonia |
|             | Mr. Ryuzo SUGIMOTO, Deputy Director of the International Cooperation Office, Ministry of Environment, Japan |
|             | Moderator: Dr. Ingeborg NIESTROY, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) & Public Strategy for Sustainable Development |
| 11:00 – 11:30 | **Coffee Break**                                                        |
| 11:30 – 12:45 | **Follow-up and Review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**  
**Smart Data Management**  
Ms. Katrin SEUSS, Project manager – Partnerships and Networks, European Environment Agency (EEA)  
Ms. Wilma GUILLEN, Assistant National Statistician for Social Sector Statistics, Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) |
Mr. Ari TYRKKÖ, Head of Co-ordination and International Activities, Statistics Finland

Mr. Dinh Khuyen NGUYEN, Deputy Director, Statistical Standards, Methodologies and IT Department, General Statistics Office (GSO) Viet Nam

Moderator: Prof. Laszlo PINTER, Central European University & International Institute for Sustainable Development

Q&A session

12:45 – 13:30

Lunch

Chair for the afternoon session: Ms. Ella ANTONIO, President, Earth Council Asia-Pacific

13:30 – 14:30

Experts' Panel on SDGs’ Implementation – beyond 2015 Delivery Options for SDGs

Ms. Ulla ANDRÉN, Department for Asia, Middle East and Humanitarian Assistance, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)

Ms. Sisavanh DIDARAVONG, Department of Planning, Ministry of Planning and Investment, Lao PDR

Dr. Ingeborg NIESTROY, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) & Public Strategy for Sustainable Development

Mr. Simon Hoiberg OLSEN, Senior Policy Researcher, Institute for Global and Environmental Strategies (IGES)

Moderator: Mr. Surendra SHRESTHA, Vice President for Development, Asian Institute for Technology, Thailand

14:30 – 15:00

Asia-Europe Environment Forum (ENVforum) and the 2030 Agenda: Action Points

Ms. Grazyna PULAWSKA, Project Manager, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

15:00 – 15:30

Conclusions of the Conference & Closing Remarks

Mr. Moritz MICHEL, Deputy Director, Hanns Seidel Foundation Viet Nam (HSF)

Mr. Niall O’CONNOR, Asia Centre Director, Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI)

Ms. Younji KANG, Project Manager, ASEM SMEs Eco-Innovation Center (ASEIC)

Ambassador ZHANG Yan, Executive Director, Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)
About the Organisers

The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) promotes understanding, strengthens relationships and facilitates cooperation among the people, institutions and organisations of Asia and Europe. ASEF enhances dialogue, enables exchanges and encourages collaboration across the thematic areas of culture, education, sustainable development, economy, governance and public health. ASEF is a not-for-profit, intergovernmental organisation located in Singapore.

For more information, please visit www.asef.org

ASEM SMEs Eco-Innovation Center (ASEIC) was established in 2011 with the principal mandate of promoting Asia-Europe cooperation to create and enhance eco-innovation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in both regions.

For more information, please visit: http://www.aseic.org/main.do

The Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) is an official German Political Foundation. It is entrusted by the German Parliament with a mandate, which lies at the core of the task of promoting democratic and sustainable structures worldwide. This mandate involves the strengthening of the relevant institutions and persons, procedures and norms and the requisite attitudes enabling such development to take place.

For more information, please visit http://www.hss.de or http://www.hss.de/southeastasia

Established in 1998, the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) is an independent, not-for-profit think tank, based in Japan. It goes beyond research to provide practical ways to protect the earth's environment and to realise greater sustainability and equity in the global community.

For more information, please visit http://iges.or.jp

ASEF’s contribution is made with the financial support of the European Commission

This event was organised with Government of Sweden through the Regional Asia Environment Conference Support Programme.