



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, POVERTY REDUCTION AND ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE: ENVIRONMENTAL ECONOMICS FOR POLICY MAKERS

**United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP),
Economy and Environment Program for South East Asia (EEPSEA) and
Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Greater Mekong Subregion Core Environment Program**

**Workshop for senior South East Asian government decisions makers from Ministries of
Finance, Planning, Environment and key line agencies**

17-19 September 2008, Bangkok, Thailand

Growth and poverty reduction: South East Asia is one of the fastest growing regions in the world. With rapid growth has come a dramatic fall in poverty. The number of people living on \$1 a day has fallen from about 21% of the population in 1990 to 7% of the population in 2004. These remaining 37 million people living on less than a dollar a day are especially concentrated in the low income countries of South East Asia. In addition 28% of all children aged under 5 years or 15 million children remain under-weight across South East Asia.

Natural resources, environment and climate: The combination of macro economic growth, local pockets of deep poverty, conflicts within and across borders and large numbers of wealthier consumers presents immense challenges for managing South East Asia's environment. Environmental health is a major concern with access to sanitation at just 56% in rural areas across South East Asia. Poor people's livelihoods remain heavily dependent on natural resources such as fisheries, forests and land and water resources for agriculture. Fisheries are declining and forests cover dropping across the region. Vulnerability to climate change is already taking a major toll in terms of growing impacts of climate related disasters such as cyclones and drought. Growth is posing its own challenges with urbanization, industrialisation and the growing demand for energy.

MDGs and the environment: A key strategy adopted to reduce poverty in developing countries is the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The MDGs have been ratified in global and national forums in all the South East Asian countries. It is now time to ensure that they will truly be met by the year 2015. The first and seventh MDGs, which are 'eradicate extreme poverty and hunger' and 'ensure environmental sustainability', come under the purview of environmental economics. Implementing the MDGs requires an appreciation of the links between environment and national development goals and an understanding of how to incorporate environmental matters into different sectors of the economy. Thus, policy makers in the South East Asian region would benefit if they could examine growth, poverty and environment linkages, identify investments that could result in potential win-win solutions and understand how to cost out these investments.

Improved understanding for action; Decision makers would benefit from an improved understanding of conceptual as well as practical linkages between environment and

development. It would also be useful to identify the tools and techniques available for improving growth and reducing the negative impacts on the environment. Thus, this workshop seeks to expose policy makers to the broad linkages between environmental change, poverty, and economic development. The workshop will try to address questions such as: How does environmental change affect the health and income of the poor? Are there ways to meet the millennium development goals and increase benefits from natural resource use? What investments and institutional changes will enable us to do so? How does climate change matter for South East Asia? Are there mechanisms to mitigate and adapt to climate change without compromising growth? Are new policy strategies or technologies that provide 'win-win' solutions feasible and what do they cost?

Workshop objectives

- Assist senior economic policy makers to take environment issues more seriously and environment policy makers to take economics more seriously
- Improve dialogue between environment and economic policy makers
- Inform participants how environment economics analysis can support pro-poor growth and environment interventions to achieve the MDGs.
- Facilitate government staff to identify in their country, areas of environmental economics analysis and policy reforms to achieve pro-poor environment outcomes
- Promote regional lesson learning and south south exchange on shared environment issues in the region

Workshop Organization: This workshop is offered by the UNDP Regional Centre Bangkok (RCB) and UNEP Regional Office in Asia Pacific (ROAP) in collaboration with the Economy and Environment Program for South East Asia (EEPSEA) and Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Greater Mekong Subregion Core Environment Program. EEPSEA is a regional network that supports research on the linkages among economic development and environmental change www.eepsea.org The workshop logistics will be managed by the UNDP and UNEP regional staff located in Bangkok, Thailand.

Proposed program duration and venue: Three days (residential) from September 17-19 2008 at the Amari Watergate Hotel, Bangkok

Participants: senior South East Asian government decisions makers from Ministries of Finance, Planning, Environment and key line agencies from ten countries: Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Thailand, Timor Leste and Viet Nam. UNDP/UNEP will be responsible for identifying participants.

Logistics Coordinator: Mr Manesh Lacoul of UNEP and Ms. Panida Charotok of UNDP will coordinate logistical details with UNDP country colleagues. lacoul@un.org; panida.charotok@undp.org

Reading material: studies done by EEPSEA grantees and other relevant case studies – see www.eepsea.org and relevant UNDP, UNEP, ADB and other materials.