

## **ASIA 2015: MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT AND TO SUSTAIN PRO-POOR GROWTH**

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- 1 There is a strong inter-dependence between managing the environment and natural resources with achievements of most other Millennium Development Goals. Environmental sustainability is at the root of reducing poverty and hunger, and also crucial to achieving health related MDGs, access to water & sanitation, etc.
- 2 The challenge of environmental management in developing countries is not only on how present generation can use the natural resources to generate growth - and especially benefiting the poor - in a sustainable manner for future use, but mostly on how to do that both while recovering from previous environmental exploitations & destructions. Especially in poorer regions, this effort of recovery is much slower, if not impossible. Hence the gap between rich and poor countries continues and in fact, enlarges.
- 3 While most Asia Pacific countries (except the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDSs) can achieve the rest of MDGs with own resources, most of them cannot achieve goal 7 on their own. AP Regional MDG Report I recognized only 10 out of 55 AP countries are “on track” here, and recommended many needed interventions, not just external resources, but also partnerships in (affordable & appropriate) technologies & knowledge, trade reforms, etc; AP Reg. Report II recognized the need to move from the old “grow first & clean later” paradigm to “green growth”; recommended regional cooperation for synergies between environment & economy; and for governance & institutional changes.
- 4 Even in middle-income countries, there are least developed regions, and there are landlocked and small-island developing regions, that cannot achieve their MDGs without affirmative policies & actions at regional and national levels. Most developing countries will need outside support for this, also better cross-border cooperation.
- 5 Most challenging is the legal recognition of the poor: subsistence harvesters of forest & sea products, coal miners, “illegal” urban poor & informal sectors, etc; who create their own jobs, but have no access to credit markets, social services or poverty reduction facilities. But on the other hand they have no responsibilities on the depleted resources and pollution caused by their activities. An effective policy intervention would be very needed in securing resource rights while addressing pressures over the environment, which also help to reduce the “poverty traps”.
- 6 Pro-poor development needs pro-poor legal system, pro-poor trade & industry

policies as well as infrastructure & transportation policies. It is not enough only to ensure that social service deliveries are reaching the poor; other development sectors are also need to be as involved in pro-jobs growth creation.

- 7 There should be a reform in investment policies as well. Nowadays many small-scale investment projects at local level are more suitable than a few big scale ones. They can be combined to improve energy service deliveries at local level. Negative impacts can be lessened, and the required investment is much smaller but deliveries are optimized.
- 8 There are still many untapped and undeveloped renewable energy resources in Asia including biomass, geothermal, micro-hydro, ocean, solar, wind, and others. But some of the appropriate technologies, which have been applied for years among local communities in Asian countries, stay at pilot levels. Private sector should be encouraged and development NGOs should be supported to scale-up/replicate those technologies; as both 'quick wins' to fulfill the energy gap & creating more jobs.
- 9 Donor harmonization and aid effectiveness should move beyond commitments at donor countries to support initiatives driven by the needs of the receiving countries or sub-regions. Leadership capacities are critical in the developing countries to catalyze achievements of MDGs, and especially to cope with energy and environmental challenges. Synchronized procedures and deliveries would ease plenty of burdens to administer the aids while increase ownerships & responsibilities within the countries, but more important are country leadership in directing donors to most difficult areas to reach & more difficult interventions to cope with own country resources.
- 10 Improving environmental governance would facilitate sustainable growth while also reduce poverty especially at local level. It can catalyze efforts to meet increased energy demand, mitigate environmental degradation, and prevent more damaging environmental catastrophes, again more sources of vulnerability to the poor.