



United Nations Centre for
Regional Development



Ministry of the Environment,
Government of Japan

Provisional Concept Note of 10th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific (Series of Webinars)

1. **THEME:** Advancing Circular Economy in Asia-Pacific towards the SDGs under COVID-19 Pandemic
2. **DATE:** Series of Webinars [Webinar I: 24 November 2020, Webinar II: 1 December 2020, Webinar III: 8 December 2020, Webinar IV: 14 December 2020, Webinar V: 17 December 2020 and Webinar VI: 22 December 2020]
3. **FORMAT:** Webinar (in Webex Platform)

4. BACKGROUND

On 25 September 2015, the Heads of State and Government and High-Level Representatives of 193 Member States of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Development Agenda titled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”¹. This Agenda outlines 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the associated 169 targets. It is structured around five pillars— people, prosperity, planet, peace and justice, and partnership. Subsequently, the New Urban Agenda was launched in October 2016². The New Urban Agenda reinforces environmental sustainability, sustainable and inclusive urban prosperity, sustainable cities and communities, and responsible sustainable consumption and production which is mentioned in SDG 11 and SDG 12¹.

The Eco-town concept is centered around zero emission concept- a concept to shift all the wastes generated from an industry sector to utilize as material input to other industry sector, aiming at removing any types of waste as a basis for establishing an environmentally harmonizing socio-economy in local community. Also, the concept aims at promoting advanced environmentally harmonizing town by being integrated into a major pillar in

¹<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf> (The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, September 2015)

² http://nua.unhabitat.org/uploads/DraftOutcomeDocumentofHabitatIII_en.pdf (New Urban Agenda, October 2016)

measures to realize local revitalization³. The Eco-town, Industrial Symbiosis and Energy park brings several national, local and private universities and research institutes together with three main themes of the “Environment” and “Information” and “Partnership” in order to develop human resources with the skills to carry into the future and move towards sound material cycle society⁴.

For example, the Kitakyushu Eco-Town Project can be viewed as a catalyst of Kitakyushu’s transition from an industrial city to green city. The transition process followed from an industrial city with controlled pollution to a green city with a strong focus on the promotion of environmental industry and sustainability with multiple dimensions including government, healthcare and economic values⁵. The environmentally friendly eco-town and pollution control provides important lessons. First is to include citizens voices in developing and implementing plans. Second, to understand economic development and waste management must come together to find a way to balance⁶. In this way, the city relates to environmentally friendly pollution control technologies and various goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The town can contribute to socioeconomic development, including social capital, economic growth, governance systems and enhancing security.

Worldwide there is a growing recognition of circular economic development approach as one of the key drivers towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the underlined SDGs. While the Asia-Pacific countries are progressively addressing and adopting 3R (reduce, reuse and recycle) policies and programmes, including technological interventions, the region still faces a number of challenges in achieving sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12), among others⁷. Each year, at least 8 million tonnes of plastics leak into the ocean, this is expected to increase to two per minute by 2030 and four per minute by 2050⁸. In a business-as-usual scenario, the ocean is expected to contain 1 tonne of plastic for every 3 tonnes of fish by 2025, and by 2050, more plastics than fish (by weight)⁸. For instance, In India, a tonne of waste plastic was used for every 1 km of road constructed, which reduced carbon dioxide emissions by 3 tonnes/km in comparison to standard construction techniques⁹. Another technology is co-processing of plastic waste as Alternative Fuel and Raw Material (AFR) in cement kilns and power plant¹⁰. In Africa, the roof tiles and fencing from recycling plastics provide the effective development of housing units and green

³ Adapted from MOEJ- Eco-town Program

⁴ https://www.jetro.go.jp/en/ind_tourism/kitakyushu_eco_town.html

⁵ Case study of Eco-town Project in Kitakyushu: tension among incumbents and transition from industrial city and green city, 2016.

⁶ Hara et al., 2014, Sustainable Development Goals: How Can Japanese Local Governments help?

<https://sciforum.net/manuscripts/2445/manuscript.pdf>

⁷ <http://enb.iisd.org/download/pdf/enb3341e.pdf> (HLPF, 12 July 2018)

⁸ https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/assets/downloads/publications/NPEC-Hybrid_English_22-11-17_Digital.pdf (THE NEW PLASTICS ECONOMY: RETHINKING THE FUTURE OF PLASTICS & CATALYSING ACTION)

⁹ Sasidharan, M. et al., 2019. Using waste plastics in road construction. K4D Helpdesk Report. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies.

¹⁰ IGES, Strategies to reduce marine plastic pollution from land-based sources in low and middle-income countries.

jobs¹¹. In Europe, Norwegian industrial parks are taking the lead as incubators for innovative technology and a circular economy. The parks make it easier for companies to take advantage of each other's energy and resources. At the same time, industrial parks have a shared knowledge base which can pave the way for developing and testing climate-friendly solutions¹². Japan aims to achieve a human-centered society (Society 5.0) in which anyone can enjoy a high quality of life full of vigor. It intends to accomplish this by incorporating advanced technologies in diverse industries and social activities and fostering innovation to create new value¹³.

Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs will require increasing economic efficiency and material wealth being integrated with social and environmental objectives to preserve the capital base of our economies and societies for future generations and safe, resilient and sustainable cities¹⁴. Starting from the 6th Regional 3R Forum in Maldives in August 2015, circular economy approach has been discussed for evolving 3R trends and development in the post-development context¹⁵. In the 7th Regional 3R Forum in South Australia in November 2016, the member countries adopted Adelaide 3R Declaration towards the Promotion of Circular Economy in Achieving Resource Efficient Societies in Asia and the Pacific under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development¹⁶. Furthermore, the 8th Regional 3R Forum was held in India in April 2018, the participated Mayors and local authorities of the Forum signed the voluntary and good-will Indore 3R Declaration of Asian Mayors on Achieving Clean Water, Clean Land and Clean Air in Cities¹⁷. Moreover, the 9th Regional 3R Forum in Thailand in March 2019, circular economy covers resource-efficiency, but do not put a great emphasis on material flows and the players' interactions in the value chains in the production-consumption system¹⁴. In addition, the summary of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2019 identified the new threats to SDG implementation in line with its mandate to identify emerging issues such as climate change and reduce pace of economic growth and the double edge sword of new technologies¹⁸. Similarly, UNEA 4 adopted the resolution of innovative pathways to achieve sustainable consumption and production¹⁹.

Information presented at the 9th Regional 3R Forum shows that a number of member countries are already undertaking activities that support multiple global agendas and

¹¹ http://www.knowledgeco-op.uct.ac.za/usr/knowledgeco-op/downloads/4_Low_cost_fence_thesis.pdf

¹² These industrial parks lead the way for a circular economy- The Explorer
<https://www.theexplorer.no/stories/renewable-resources/these-industrial-parks-lead-the-way-for-a-circular-economy/>

¹³ https://www8.cao.go.jp/cstp/english/society5_0/index.html (Society 5.0)

¹⁴ <http://www.uncrd.or.jp/content/documents/7761Chiar%20summary-for%20website.pdf> (9th Regional 3R Forum, March 2019)

¹⁵ <http://www.uncrd.or.jp/content/documents/3001FINAL-Co-Chairs%20Summary3R%20Forum-Maldives-FINAL%20Version-12Oct2015%20-%20for%20web.pdf> (6th Regional 3R Forum, August 2015)

¹⁶ <http://www.uncrd.or.jp/content/documents/4667Chair%20Summary-Adelaide%203R%20Forum-FINAL%20CIRCULATION.pdf> (7th Regional 3R Forum, November 2016)

¹⁷ <http://www.uncrd.or.jp/content/documents/6541Final%20Indore%203R%20Declaration-11April%202018.pdf> (8th Regional 3R Forum, April 2018)

¹⁸ <http://enb.iisd.org/download/pdf/enb3355e.pdf> (HLPF, 9-19 July 2019)

¹⁹ <https://papersmart.unon.org/resolution/uploads/k1900824.pdf#overlay-context=node/243> (UNEA 4 Resolution, 2019)

agreements²⁰. In 2019, 47 countries presented the voluntary national reviews (VNRs)¹⁸ with seven countries presented for the second time¹⁸. For example, Sri Lanka noted challenges related to institutional fragmentation and described the Sustainable Development Act, which aims to promote coherence¹⁸. Cambodia highlighted the substantial reduction in the incidence of poverty, and the localization of the SDGs through the formulation of Cambodia Sustainable Development Goals (CSDG), which include an additional goal on clearing landmines¹⁸. The UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific highlighted VNR-related challenges in data availability, reliability and disaggregation, and the high reporting burden for most members of the region, which could be lighted through simplifies and unifies reporting platforms¹⁸.

With the above background, the Ministry of the Environment of the Government of Japan (MOEJ), and the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD) of Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) / UN DESA will co-organize the 10th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific through a series of webinars. The theme of the Forum is “*Advancing Circular Economy in Asia-Pacific towards the SDGs under COVID-19 Pandemic*”. The Forum will allow for strategic consideration to deliver outcomes of the Ha Noi 3R Declaration-Sustainable 3R Goals for Asia and the Pacific for 2013-2023²⁰, which is also related to the various global agendas and agreements.

5. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the 10th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific are:

- to address streamlining of resource recycling in the Asia-Pacific region ~ Contribution towards SDGs;
- to identify and discuss environmental and economic effect in Eco-town projects;
- to address various environment, social and economic benefits of advanced resource recovery and recycling technologies in considering SDGs; and
- to review and evaluate countries’ progress, initiatives, achievements and best practices in implementing the Ha Noi 3R Declaration – Sustainable 3R Goals for Asia and the Pacific for 2013-2023.

6. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The 10th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific will provide innovative solutions in terms of policy, institutional setups and partnership towards effective implementation of 3R and resource efficiency policies and strategies. The Forum will discuss the progress towards achieving the goals and targets of Ha Noi 3R Declaration (2013-2023)²⁰, in addition to gaining policy and scientific insights in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals¹.

²⁰ http://www.uncrd.or.jp/content/documents/659Hanoi-Declaration_Eng.pdf (Ha Noi 3R Declaration, 2013)

7. CO-ORGANIZERS

The 10th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific is co-organized by the Ministry of the Environment, Government of Japan (MOEJ), and the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD) of the Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) /United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA).

8. PARTNERS / SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

The 10th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific is supported by a number of international and donor organizations such as - United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP) (tbc); United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (tbc); and among others.

9. GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

Asia-Pacific countries - Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, the People's Republic of China, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Cook Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, the Republic of Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, New Zealand, Niue, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Viet Nam.

10. PARTICIPANTS

Participation in the Forum is by invitation only. Approximately 500 participants, including high-level government representatives from Asia-Pacific countries, city mayors, international experts, research institutes and resource persons, and others as listed below will attend the Forum:

- High level government representatives and policy makers from relevant Ministries such as Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Energy, and Ministry of Natural resources and Environment, etc. ;
- City Mayors/Local Government representatives;
- Experts and international resource persons, including representatives of scientific and Research and Development (R&D) institutions in the areas of 3R/resource efficiency/waste management/life cycle assessment and management;
- Representatives of UN and international organizations, including international financial institutions, multi-lateral development banks and donor agencies;
- Representatives of the private and business sector and NGOs etc.

11. REGISTRATION AND HOW TO REGISTER

This Forum is open to the public upon registration and the organizers will be screening all registrant participants as this is an intergovernmental meeting. Participation in the UN Forum is free of charge.

12. LANGUAGE AND DOCUMENTATION

All documentation material will be in English.

UNCRD will disseminate all documents and presentation material of the Forum on the Forum web link only. Please visit the Forum web link for further information:
<http://www.uncrd.or.jp/index.php?page=view&nr=482&type=230&menu=214>

13. OFFICIAL PRE EVENTS

The 10th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific will have several pre-events (more information in programme)

14. CORRESPONDENCE

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