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## **PROPOSAL FOR AN ASIA SCIENCE PANEL ON AIR QUALITY (ASPAQ)**

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### **1. BACKGROUND AND AIMS**

Accompanying rapid economic growth, emissions of air pollutants in the Asian continent have exceeded those of European and North American continents after the year 2000, and even those in East Asia (Northeast and Southeast Asia) alone are comparable to the other continents as of 2005. This situation prompted concerns about Asian air pollution locally, regionally, hemispherically and globally from the standpoint of air toxicants such as photochemical oxidants and particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), biogeochemically active species such as acidic and nitrogenous compounds as well as short-lived climate pollutants such as black carbon and tropospheric ozone. An emerging issue to seriously consider is the link between air pollution and climate change, especially regarding short-lived climate forcers (SLCF) and effects of SO<sub>2</sub> reduction on climate change.

There is a need to consider such issues from a scientific viewpoint and make suggestions to policy makers to take action. However, the situation in Asia is different from Europe and North America where regional cooperation on air pollution mitigation based on scientific knowledge has been well developed under the Convention on Long-rang Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP), Asia does not have an adequate framework for scientific discussion for atmospheric management.

On the basis of the above considerations, a Japanese team headed by Professor Akimoto conducted research on possible regional framework to strengthen atmospheric management and the science-policy interface to send timely and appropriate messages from the scientific community to policy makers. This team proposes an Asia Science Panel on Air Quality (ASPAQ) aiming to synthesize scientific knowledge on air pollution in the Asian region to reach a common understanding among scientists and policy makers, and to develop an international initiative for an integrated approach to air pollution and climate change reflecting the views of Asian scientists.

### **2. CONTENTS OF ASPAQ**

ASPAQ would be constituted of scientists related to air pollution research. It would review the existing latest scientific knowledge, prepare reports and “Summary for Policy Makers” based on a consensus of major research scientists on the issues of air pollution and its relation to climate

change in Asian region.

This proposal is still very preliminary, and the research team would like to solicit views and comments at various occasions to further develop the proposal on ASPAQ:

While the concept of ASPAQ is still in the infant stage, the preliminary research identified several important issues to be considered/discussed:

- (i) What should be the major functions of ASPAQ?
  - There are several different types of such scientific bodies, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Ozone Panel under the Montreal Protocol, and science bodies under the CLRTAP. Major questions include:
    - ✧ Whether ASPAQ may address newly emerging scientific findings for consensus building among scientists (and policy makers)?
    - ✧ What should be the scope of research: atmospheric science, impact studies, short-term/long-term mitigation measures? Should a stepwise approach be adopted?
    - ✧ Whether the focus of activities should be mainly on review of existing research, or whether the focus should be broader including enhanced research collaboration and joint research?
- (ii) What should be the geographical scope?
  - Asia as a whole, East Asia or any other geographical scope?
- (iii) How ASPAQ members should be selected?
  - Nominations by national governments? Are there any other ways to select competent scientists?
- (iv) Whether a new body should be created, or whether existing bodies could be reformed?
  - Existing frameworks include, Joint Forum on Atmospheric Environment in Asia and the Pacific, EANET, Malé Declaration, Asian Co-benefits Partnership (ACP), CAI-Asia, NEASPEC, LTP. Any others?
- (v) How ASPAQ should be organized, including the secretariat?
- (vi) What would be possible funding sources?
  - National contributions, international funding or use of existing funding mechanisms such as climate funding?