



Media Release

Seventh Meeting of the Sub-Regional Ministerial Steering Committee (MSC) on Transboundary Haze Pollution

Brunei Darussalam, 29 April 2009

1. Environment Ministers and their representatives from Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand and the Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN met at the Seventh Meeting of the Sub-Regional Ministerial Steering Committee (MSC) on Transboundary Haze Pollution on 29 April 2009 in Brunei Darussalam.
2. The ASEAN Specialised Meteorological Centre (ASMC) reported that occasional showers interspersed with short dry spells can be expected in May 2009, with brief surges in hotspot activities during the drier periods. The traditional dry season in the southern part of ASEAN region is likely to start around June and last until September 2009, where slightly below normal to slightly above normal rainfall is expected during that period. Therefore increased hotspot activities can be expected in the region, with possibility of transboundary smoke haze during the more persistent dry periods. The Ministers agreed that vigilance should therefore be stepped up in anticipation of any escalation of hotspot activities during this dry period.
3. The Ministers agreed that member countries will also share data on PM10 (particulate matter of less than 10 micron) for regular reporting by ASMC, which will enable monitoring of the dispersion and impact of transboundary smoke haze in the region, in addition to reporting on the number of hotspots and weather outlook.
4. The Ministers expressed appreciation on the substantive efforts by Indonesia in implementing its Plan of Action (PoA) in Dealing with Transboundary Haze Pollution and urged that these efforts be sustained. The Ministers noted several new actions taken by Indonesia to further enhance its efforts to prevent and mitigate land and forest fires, among others:
 - a. written early notices to various stakeholders by the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Agriculture, to remain alert to prevent land and forest fires;
 - b. mobilization of a team from the National Disaster Management Board (BNPB), Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Forestry, Ministry of

- Agriculture, Armed Forces and Police (under coordination of BNPB) to conduct ground checking in Riau Province;
- c. good agriculture practices in Kubu Raya District, West Kalimantan Province;
 - d. zero-burn campaign (including enactment of legal instruments that prohibit the use of fires for land clearing);
 - e. provision of machinery for land clearing for South Sumatra and Central Kalimantan;
 - f. evaluation of the making of compost, charcoal and briquette in the fire prone areas;
 - g. making use of sugar plant waste for feeding animals in Lampung, Yogyakarta and Central Java;
 - h. conduct of monthly rainfall forecast and further development of Fire Danger Rating System.
5. The Ministers noted further progress in the collaboration between the governments of Indonesia and Singapore for Muaro Jambi Regency in implementing various action programmes under the Jambi Master Plan. A new action programme namely Jambi Peatland Management Knowledge Base and Training Programme, which aims to reduce fires in peatlands through science-based implementation of mitigative water management and conservation methods, has been initiated.
 6. The Ministers also noted further progress in the collaboration between the governments of Indonesia and Malaysia in Riau Province, including installation of an air quality monitoring station in Bagan Siapi-api, Rokan Hilir Regency expected to be in full operation by May 2009. Fire and haze prevention programmes through rehabilitation and improved management of peatlands in 5 selected villages in Rokan Hilir Regency is being implemented.
 7. The Ministers welcomed the representatives from Riau and Jambi Provinces to share their experiences on the effectiveness and impacts of the action programmes under the bilateral collaborations with Malaysia and Singapore, for possible replication in other fire-prone provinces. The Ministers agreed to Singapore's suggestion to organize a forum in October 2009 inviting governors from the fire-prone provinces to share the experiences of Riau and Jambi Provinces.
 8. The Ministers extended their appreciation to Thailand for the approval of the Government to contribute USD 50,000 to the ASEAN Transboundary Haze Pollution Control Fund. The Ministers noted that Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Singapore and Viet Nam had earlier contributed USD 50,000 each to the Fund.
 9. The Ministers expressed appreciation to the Global Environment Facility for the final approval of the Project on Rehabilitation and Sustainable Use of Peatland

Forests in Southeast Asia. The Ministers welcomed the offer by Thailand to host a workshop in June 2009 to discuss implementation of the project.

10. The Ministers are scheduled to meet in October 2009 in Singapore, back to back with the 11th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment.
