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## Note from the Director

Institutional and governance issues in tackling climate change and natural resources have become more complicated than before, when there existed less information and capacity to address them. In other words, the conventional system, which relies on sovereign states, has begun to face challenges and reveal its limitations, especially in addressing environmental problems while ensuring sustainable growth.

For example, there has been an increased understanding on the importance of cities in curbing GHG emissions, which seem to represent a large portion, possibly 70 percent, of the total GHG emissions of the world. Cities are not necessarily under the full control of their central governments, and they may have the capability for developing and implementing policy measures to control emissions, based on the low emission development scenario. In a way, they could serve a complementary role to the already existing ones that are governed by central governments. In this sense, the first article of this volume well discusses how a decentralized climate change architecture can contribute both to addressing climate change as well as to pursuing a low emission development.

Furthermore, a low carbon development path requires innovation. R&D, and deployment and market developments of new green technologies are all required to realize a low emission development. However, in a situation where conventional energy sources such as coal are still available at a cheaper price, introducing new green technologies to a society can be of a challenge. A study on the Carbon Capture and Storage technology in the U.K. demonstrates such complex issue.

On the other hand, when it comes to the issue of resources, competition for sovereign claims seem to be more apparent, as they are discussed more in the context of sovereign state's resource ownership. Due to the pressure of securing necessary resources combined with developments in new technologies, states have explored more possibilities in exploiting natural resources in those

areas where the exertion of state sovereignty used to be neither apparent nor important. In this sense, it is noteworthy that both cases on the Arctic region and the maritime dispute in Southeast Asia demonstrate a new governance architecture based on soft and cooperative principles that may be a more feasible solution instead of the conventional Westphalian system.

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# [CONFERENCE REPORT]

## Special Meeting of the Project Steering Committee for the UNDP/GEF Yellow Sea Project

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# 1. The UNDP/GEF Yellow Sea Project

What is the UNDP/GEF Yellow Sea Project? Before going into the details of the conference itself, I would like to briefly introduce the UNDP/GEF Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem Project. Sometimes I feel quite unfortunate because despite the importance of the Yellow Sea in Northeast Asia, particularly for China and the Korean Peninsula, many people are unaware of this project. Although most people are familiar with the issues surrounding Dokdo Islands off the east coast of Korea, the diverse issues of the Yellow Sea seem to be lacking public awareness.

While the Yellow Sea serves a very important role for its coastal countries, the Yellow Sea is suffering from serious problems that need to be addressed. Despite the socioeconomic developments surrounding the Yellow Sea, the Yellow Sea has been facing various environmental problems. The coastal countries have failed to constructively and comprehensively pursue environmental protection and effectively enforce already existing global regulations relevant to the protection and preservation of its regional seas.

Recognized by the international community and as part of the GEF's International Waters Program, the YS LME Project was launched in 2004. The first phase of the Project was from 2005 to 2010 and during this phase completed the preparation of the Transnational Diagnostic Analysis (TDA) and Strategic Action Program (SAP). The SAP was created to identify management strategies and actions towards the year 2020 and the TDA serves as the scientific foundation of the SAP. When the first phase of the Project came to an end, in order to facilitate a smooth transition to the second phase of the Project, the Project Steering Committee (PSC) of the first phase was extended during the 6th, 7th, and 8th PSC Meetings, agreed to be operated by the September of 2013.

In November 2012, the GEF approved the Project Identification Form (PIF) and the respective governments must submit the final Project Document to the GEF Council to begin the implementation of the second phase of the Project. As the bridge period from the first phase to the second phase is coming to an end, it became urgent that the two governments prepare the final Project Document for the submission. This is the reason

why this Special PSC Meeting following the 8th PSC Meeting was held in April.

## **2. The Special Meeting of the Project Steering Committee (PSC)**

The Special PSC Meeting was held on beautiful Jeju Island from the 8th to the 9th of April, 2013. Government officials and experts from the relevant parties have gathered at the Grand Hotel Jeju to discuss and settle crucial issues regarding the preparation of the second phase of the Project. This Special PSC Meeting had symbolic importance, firstly because the YS LME Project itself was in a transition period from the end of the first phase of the Project to the second phase, and secondly many of the important agreements have not been made including the budget issues and the location issue of the Project Management Office (PMO) of the second phase of the Project. Moreover, since the YS LME Project was operated with the financial assistance from the GEF, with the first phase coming to a close, the PMO was running short of the Project's operation funds. If the second phase of the Project does not start within the anticipated time period, the PMO may not be able to operate after September, 2013 and would have no other choice but to close down the office. Therefore, the objective of the Special Meeting was to expedite the progress of the introduction of the second phase of the Project without any more delays.

Understanding the importance of the Meeting, I flew to Jeju Island accompanying Professor Suh-Yong Chung, who is the Advisor and Consultant for the YS LME Project. Thanks to Professor Chung, I was able to first-handedly experience a prestigious Meeting, opened only to the invited participants. As a research assistant to Professor Chung, I was honored and privileged to witness a historical meeting making crucial decisions for the second phase of the YS LME Project.

The Meeting began at 9 A.M. sharp in the morning of the 8th. The meeting room was quite large in size but I could initially feel the intense atmosphere. The Meeting had several sensitive and urgent issues to settle and because of this I could feel the tensions among the representatives from the relevant stakeholders. Understanding the

significance of the Meeting, I was keen on keeping up with the important details.

### **3. Meeting agenda and procedure**

The Meeting followed the United Nations format, the representative from the UNDP, Mr. Jose Padilla, opened the Meeting by welcoming the participants and giving a brief introduction on the Project's progress so far. He also explained how the approval of the second phase of the project came about and expressed his gratitude to the government of the Republic of Korea for its support to the transition period of the Project. As the representative of the UNDP, he anticipated with optimism that through continuous negotiations in the following two days of the meeting, the key issues would be settled.

After Mr. Padilla, the representatives from the Chinese delegation and the South Korean delegation expressed their thanks and made brief remarks on their hopes to make a successful start to the second phase of the Project. Following each government's comments, representatives from the partner organizations of the YS LME Project such as the PEMSEA, NOWPAP and WWF Japan expressed their thanks for the invitation to the Meeting and hoped for continuous cooperation with the YS LME Project.

Then other individual participants were each given the opportunity to introduce themselves. I, also as a participant of the Meeting as an observer, introduced myself to the Meeting as an assistant to Professor Chung. After the introduction of the participants, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Meeting were elected. The head of Chinese delegation was nominated as the Chairperson and the head of the South Korean delegation was nominated as the Vice-Chairperson.

Following the election of the Chair and Vice-Chair, the Secretariat of the YS LME Project gave an introduction on the Meeting Agenda and the procedures of the Meeting. Going through the agenda item one by one, led by the Secretariat, the participants from each government began to discuss and agree on the various elements of the Project Document.

## 4. Key agreements and findings

As the Meeting progressed, I found that several issues gained greater attention from the participants thus generating more intense debates throughout the Meeting. As the clock showed 1 PM on my watch, the participants kept discussing even passing the designated lunch period. The Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson agreed to take a break and continue with the discussions in small groups which would facilitate the agreements better between the two governments. The Chair-person announced that the participants would return to the main Meeting table at 3:30 PM after small group meetings only involving government representatives from the Chinese and South Korean governments. I was not able to attend the small group meetings but several sensitive issues have been discussed and agreed.

One of the important issues that needed to be agreed and included in the Project Document was the location issue of the PMO for the second phase of the Project. Prior to the Special PSC Meeting, two National Workshops, one in Beijing, China (26 March, 2013) and another in Seoul, Republic of Korea (29 March, 2013) have been held to accumulate major comments and thoughts on the revision and finalization of the Project Document before going to the Special Meeting in April. During the National Workshops, both countries, China and the Republic of Korea expressed their willingness to host the PMO of the second phase of the Project. The PMO of the first phase of the Project was located in Ansan, Republic of Korea, but due to many reasons including national interests, China also expressed willingness to host the PMO for the second phase. Republic of Korea also wished to continue to keep the PMO in its territory.

To represent the stance of the government of the Republic of Korea, the representative of the South Korean government, Mr. Yun made his remarks on the details of the Republic of Korea's proposal to host the PMO in Korea. He expressed that for a smooth transition from the first phase of the Project to the second phase, the location of the PMO should remain the same. Also Mr. Yun reiterated Republic of Korea's commitment and dedication to preserve the environment of the Yellow Sea and secure the well-functioning of the PMO of the second phase.

On the other hand, one of the delegates from China, Mr. Yang, expressed the willingness of the government of China to host the PMO of the second phase of the Project with several points. Mr. Yang explained that the PMO of the YS LME Project so far has been stationed in Korea for more than 8 years since 2004 and that the benefits of hosting the YS LME Project should be shared by the participating countries. Also, Mr. Yang referred to the importance of the participation of DPR Korea and for a more convenient participation of DPR Korea as a member, it would be more favorable for the PMO to be located in a mutual location.

As both sides could not come to an agreement, the location issue was taken to the small group meetings and after long hours of consultation among the representatives from each government, the participants returned to the main meeting table around 4 PM and announced that the PMO of the second phase of the YS LME Project shall be located in RO Korea and a branch PMO shall be located in China. It has been agreed that the functions and activities of the PMO and branch PMO would be decided at a later stage.

Before attending the Meeting, I did not realize the importance of the location of the PMO of the Project. But after seeing long hours of discussions and the representatives not being able to come up with an agreement, I began to understand that national interests may become very sensitive. Private small group meetings brought an end to the huge debate on the location of the PMO of the second phase of the YS LME Project.

Majority of the second day was spent on going through the Project Document, agreeing on details like wording of the names of the organization structure of the second phase of the Project. For instance, the two governments have agreed to close down the PSC once the bridge period ends and name the PSC as the Interim Commission Council for the second phase of the Project. Another key issue that was discussed was the time frame necessary to actually begin the second phase. As I have understood, it seemed that a minor gap between the UNDP and the two governments existed regarding the necessary time frame to begin the second phase. Regardless, the two governments and Mr. Padilla agreed that the preparation for the second phase need to be done without any hold-ups.

## 5. Concluding remarks

5 P.M. on the 9th of April, the Chairperson called the Special PSC Meeting to an end. The two-days of hard work seemed both long and short, many important decisions have been made and the Meeting in the end has become a success. Now the rest of the preparation relies on how quickly the GEF would respond to the Project Document submitted by the two governments.

Participating a high-level inter-governmental meeting was an unforgettable experience for me. Although I could not follow every detail that was discussed during the two days, I realized that negotiation is not simple. I learned that sensitive issues need excessive time and effort to result in a consensus among the relevant stakeholders. With hopes of the second phase of the YS LME Project to be launched as early as possible, I flew back home from the beautiful Jeju island.