

Foreword

Prior to the formal establishment and inauguration of the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) in April 1998, two international workshops were organized to examine and explore possible themes, areas, objectives and methods of IGES' research activities. Based on discussions at these workshops, environmental governance was identified as one of the main themes of strategic research to be undertaken by IGES, with a particular focus on Asian countries and the region as a whole.

Accordingly, it was decided to launch a research project on environmental governance (EG) as one of the five research projects to be implemented by IGES, initially for a period of three years (from April 1998 to March 2001), and a research plan was drawn up by the leader of the EG project, Professor Hisakazu (Kazu) Kato of Nagoya University, setting out the purpose, basic approach and methodology, together with an outline of the yearly work schedule and expected outcomes.

According to the research plan adopted and endorsed by its Board of Directors, the main purpose of the IGES/EG Project is to address and analyse major issues of environmental governance and to make concrete policy recommendations relevant to the Asian region. Several national and sub-regional environmental governance systems were to be selected and examined in a cross-sectoral and comparative manner.

Thus, a major component of the research project involved case studies of national environmental governance systems in selected countries of Asia, starting with China, India, Thailand and Japan during the first fiscal year (April 1998-March 1999). Areas to be examined with regard to national environmental governance systems included: how decisions are made; who makes them; how decisions are implemented; what kind of information is available and from what source; how processes are reviewed; how these are influenced by internal and external forces; how have the systems evolved; and if they can be adapted to respond to newly emerging problems and challenges.

Based on an analytical framework developed by Dr. Miranda Schreurs of the University of Maryland, U.S.A., country studies were conducted in collaboration with competent research institutes and researchers from the four countries concerned, utilizing a common methodology and format for analysis and comparison. The outcomes and

findings of the four country studies were discussed and disseminated at an international workshop organized by IGES in March 1999.

Later in the same year, country reports were prepared for five more countries of Asia; namely, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and the Republic of Korea (South Korea), similarly in cooperation with research institutes and researchers in those countries. The results of these additional country studies, along with presentations made on some cross-sectoral issues such as “trade and environment” and “environmental security,” were discussed at an international symposium organized jointly by IGES and Sophia University in March 2000, in which more than 300 people participated, representing a wide cross-section of public as well as private sector organizations and individuals interested in the subject matter.

A summary (and preliminary) report synthesizing the findings of nine country studies as well as conclusions of the two international workshops and accompanying symposia, was prepared in time for the meeting of environmental ministers of the governments of the Asia-Pacific region at the ECO-ASIA 2000 Congress and the UN/ESCAP Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development, both of which were held in Kitakyushu, Japan in August, 2000.

This volume has been compiled in order to provide a comprehensive yet succinct picture of all the major inputs and outputs of the EG Project during the past three years as far as they are related to case studies of national environmental governance systems in Asia. It is arranged in chronological order as described above:

Part I contains the original research plan for the EG Project and the analytical framework for comparative studies of environmental governance in Asia proposed by Dr. Miranda Schreurs and employed by the Project in conducting its country studies.

Included in Part II are the results of four country studies carried out during the first year of the Project, and comments and discussions which took place at the International Workshop on Environmental Governance in Four Asian Countries, held on March 18, 1999 in Hayama, Japan.

Part III consists of various papers presented at (and the main elements of the proceedings of) the International Symposium on Environmental Governance in Asia,

March 9, 2000, jointly organized by IGES and Sophia University and held in Tokyo, Japan.

Finally, in Part IV, a synthesis of major findings and recommendations generated by the country studies is presented. This is by no means a complete and final report of the Environmental Governance Project on case studies of national environmental governance systems in Asia. Any comments or suggestions for improvement are welcome.

In closing, I wish once again to express, on behalf of all members of the small EG project team at IGES, our sincere thanks to all the collaborators, contributors as well as participants in the workshops and symposia for their cooperation and contribution to the Project during the past three years.

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