

**“Asia-Pacific Ministerial Dialogue: From the Millennium Development Goals to the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015”
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Statement by Dr. Young-Woo Park, Regional Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, Asia and the Pacific

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentleman. MDG-7 on the environment was, as many of you may know, something of a last minute afterthought by the architects of the MDGs at the time.

Rio+20 and its explicit articulation that environment is a key dimension- not an afterthought or a passenger to the Future We Want and the Future We Need-underlines the imperative to incorporate environment on an equal footing with the social and economic in the design of the SDGs.

All existing goals and targets that have been negotiated and agreed on internationally can be taken as a “ground floor” for the SDGs. These include not only the MDGs, but also those agreed under Multilateral Environmental Agreements with respect for biodiversity, climate change, ozone and chemicals.

Among the challenges in developing SDGs is that they must incorporate all dimensions of sustainability in a balanced way – environmental, social, and economic. Each of these dimensions requires careful thinking and analysis about the role they will play in SDGs. UNEP is undertaking an extensive analysis and consultation on international environmental goals, including MDG 7 on environmental sustainability. The evaluation points out MDG7 was, perhaps from its inception, the weakest in terms of breadth and ambition of all the MDGs. Progress achieved for MDG 7 far has been especially uneven, and there is still a lot of ground to cover by 2015. Hence, new goals and targets may need to pick up the unfinished business of MDG7. Secondly, new goals and targets should also cover a wider range of important environmental sustainability topics that have emerged or were neglected before. The criteria UNEP proposes for mainstreaming environment in SDGs for consideration by member states include: strongly linking environmental issues to socio-economic developmental issues; decoupling of socio-economic development from escalating resource use and environmental degradation; coverage of critical issues of environmental sustainability such as important irreversible changes in the global environment; take into account current global environmental goals and targets; scientifically credible and verifiable; and progress must be “trackable”.

In this regard, UNEP stands ready to provide more in depth briefings and analysis to individual ESCAP member states on embedding the environment in SDGs at their request.

Thank you.