



United Nations Centre for  
Regional Development



Ministry of Natural Resources  
and Environment, Thailand



Ministry of the Environment,  
Government of Japan

As of 05 February 2019

## **Provisional Concept Note of Ninth Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific**

1. **THEME:** 3R as a Way for Moving towards Sufficiency Economy – Implications for SDGs
2. **DATE:** 4-6 March 2019
3. **VENUE:** Royal Orchid Sheraton Hotel & Towers, Bangkok, Thailand

### **4. BACKGROUND**

On 25 September 2015, the Heads of State and Government and High Level Representatives of 193 Member States of the United Nations adopted the 2030 Development Agenda titled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”<sup>1</sup>. This Agenda outlines 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the associated 169 targets. It is structured around five pillars— people, prosperity, planet, peace and justice, and partnership. Subsequently, the New Urban Agenda was launched in October 2016<sup>2</sup>. The New Urban Agenda reinforces environmental sustainability, sustainable and inclusive urban prosperity, sustainable cities and communities, and responsible sustainable consumption and production which is mentioned in SDG 11 and SDG 12<sup>1</sup>.

The circular economy represents a fundamental alternative to the currently predominating linear approach that is based on unlimited resource extraction and disregards the natural resources of planetary boundaries. A circular economy is a regenerative system in which resource input and waste, emission, and energy leakage are minimized by slowing, closing, and narrowing energy and material loops. This can be achieved through long-lasting design, maintenance, repair, reuse, remanufacturing, refurbishing, recycling, and upcycling. This is in contrast to a linear economy which is a 'take, make, dispose' model of production<sup>3</sup>. The material needs to be revisited based on circularity principles rather than throw-away products.

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<sup>1</sup><https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf> (The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, September 2015)

<sup>2</sup> [http://nua.unhabitat.org/uploads/DraftOutcomeDocumentofHabitatIII\\_en.pdf](http://nua.unhabitat.org/uploads/DraftOutcomeDocumentofHabitatIII_en.pdf) (New Urban Agenda, October 2016)

<sup>3</sup> Towards the Circular Economy: an economic and business rationale for an accelerated transition. Ellen MacArthur Foundation. 2012.

Since inception of the Regional 3R Forum in Asia-Pacific policy consultations are progressively happening in “the resource” domain with an understanding that supply security of natural resources is key to maintain the sustainability as well as the living standards of the people of the region. Starting from the 6<sup>th</sup> Regional 3R Forum in Maldives in August 2015, circular economy approach has been discussed for evolving 3R trends and development in the post-development context<sup>4</sup>. In the 7<sup>th</sup> Regional 3R Forum in South Australia in November 2016, the member countries adopted Adelaide 3R Declaration towards the Promotion of Circular Economy in Achieving Resource Efficient Societies in Asia and the Pacific under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>5</sup>. Furthermore, the 8<sup>th</sup> Regional 3R Forum was held in India in April 2018 and focused on the role of 3R in achieving clean water, clean land and clean air for reducing environmental pollution and resource efficiency<sup>6</sup>. The Forum emphasized the importance of improving sustainable consumption and production pattern of natural resources which particularly related to SDG 12. In addition, the summary of the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2018 mentioned that SDG 12 lies at the heart of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement<sup>7</sup>; and called for sustainability to be core fiduciary responsibility for businesses<sup>8</sup>.

Worldwide there is a growing recognition of circular economic development approach as one of the key drivers towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the underlined SDGs. While the Asia-Pacific countries are progressively addressing and adopting 3R (reduce, reuse and recycle) policies and programmes, including technological interventions, the region still faces a number of challenges in achieving sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12), among others. The extraction patterns of raw materials in the developing world are supporting unsustainable levels of per capita consumption and production in developed world<sup>9</sup>. The resource intensive conventional economic development patterns along with indiscriminate demand for raw materials and natural resources have not only brought heavy environmental and social impacts, but also have challenged the lasting supply security of resources for the current as well as the future generations. A resource efficient and circular economic development model calls for a transition of the management of natural resources with a progressive minimization of waste in both consumption and production processes through a range of 3R policies and measures. With unprecedented levels of urbanization and emergence of new mega-cities, one of the defining features for the region’s sustainability in terms of resource security will be to progressively adopt the low carbon, resource efficient and circular economic principles in all development sectors.

Information presented at the 8<sup>th</sup> Regional 3R Forum shows that a number of member countries are already undertaking activities that support multiple global agendas and agreements<sup>10</sup>. In 2018, 46 countries presented the voluntary national reviews (VNRs)<sup>8</sup> in HLPF 2018. For example, Indonesia outlined national initiatives on eco-labelling and clean

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.uncrd.or.jp/content/documents/3001FINAL-Co-Chairs%20Summary3R%20Forum-Maldives-FINAL%20Version-12Oct2015%20-%20for%20web.pdf> (6<sup>th</sup> Regional 3R Forum, August 2015)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.uncrd.or.jp/content/documents/4667Chair%20Summary-Adelaide%203R%20Forum-FINAL%20CIRCULATION.pdf> (7<sup>th</sup> Regional 3R Forum, November 2016)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.uncrd.or.jp/content/documents/6541Final%20Indore%203R%20Declaration-11April%202018.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2015/cop21/eng/109r01.pdf> (8<sup>th</sup> Regional 3R Forum, April 2018)

<sup>8</sup> <http://enb.iisd.org/download/pdf/enb3345e.pdf> (HLPF, 9-18 July 2018)

<sup>9</sup> <http://enb.iisd.org/download/pdf/enb3341e.pdf> (HLPF, 12 July 2018)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.uncrd.or.jp/?page=view&nr=1019&type=13&menu=198> (8<sup>th</sup> Regional 3R Forum, April 2018)

production<sup>8</sup>. Singapore highlighted the implementation of integrated closed-loop systems for recycling wastewater and waste material<sup>8</sup>. As per 2018 Voluntary National Reviews<sup>11</sup>, through several countries have made achievements towards more sustainable consumption and production, no country is on firm path towards achieving SDG 12 in its entirety (UN DESA, 2018)<sup>11</sup>. On a general level, some of the challenges that countries reported on when striving towards sustainable consumption and production include inadequate research and development funding and capacity, lack of policy and legal frameworks, contradictory policies and legislation, lack of financing and adequate skilled staffing of the institutions concerned with environmental governance, inadequate coordination efforts between different levels of government, and among different stakeholders (UN DESA, 2018)<sup>11</sup>.

A key message from the 8th Regional 3R Forum, was that there was an expression of interest and commitment to move towards the path of sound material cycle societies and circular economic development. This was directed to achieve necessary socio-economic and industrial transformation through sustainable use of natural resources and improved land, water and air quality. During the 8th Regional 3R Forum, the participating mayors and local city authorities voluntarily adopted and signed the Indore 3R Declaration of Asian Mayors on achieving clean land, clean water and clean air in cities<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, the 9<sup>th</sup> Regional 3R Forum will discuss about self-sufficiency with a broader discussion on proper and effective management and utilization of waste to resource through closed loop system, namely circular economy approach, and fourth industrial revolution (Industry 4.0).

To this end, the 9th Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific, under the theme of “**3R as a way for moving towards sufficiency economy – Implications for SDGs**” aims to address how 3R and resource efficiency could play a critical role in achieving sufficiency economy, which advocates rationale use of natural resources that gives people better environment, quality of life and livelihood security as well as prudence and built-in self-immunity to cope with external shocks and global volatility through balanced development. The philosophy of sufficiency economy was echoed by the His Majesty the Late King Bhumibol Adulyadej of The Kingdom of Thailand<sup>12</sup>. The Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) can be a survival guidance suitable for global population to follow. Sufficiency, meaning moderation and not to the extreme, could apply in terms of the sustainable use of consumption and production patterns<sup>13</sup>. SEP advocates moderation, use of appropriate technology, and emphasis on bottom-up decision making and taking care of the environment. Thailand is overcoming the effects of its previous economic crisis with the help of SEP. Application of SEP for environmental management focuses on the manufacturer or consumer and tries to start production or consumption under the scope of income restriction or exhausted resources<sup>12</sup>. It is directly linked to increase production control capability and reduce the risk of uncontrolled economic loss and environmental degradation. In this way, SEP has become Thailand’s

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[https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/210732018\\_VNRs\\_Synthesis\\_compilation\\_11118\\_FS\\_BB\\_Format\\_FINAL\\_cover.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/210732018_VNRs_Synthesis_compilation_11118_FS_BB_Format_FINAL_cover.pdf) (UN DESA, 2018)

<sup>12</sup>

[http://www.mfa.go.th/SEPforSDGs/SEPThailandsPathtowardsSDGs/SEP\\_Thailands\\_Path\\_towards\\_SDGs.pdf](http://www.mfa.go.th/SEPforSDGs/SEPThailandsPathtowardsSDGs/SEP_Thailands_Path_towards_SDGs.pdf) (Sufficiency Economy Philosophy: Thailand’s Path towards Sustainable Development Goals)

<sup>13</sup> [https://ac.els-cdn.com/S1877042815043578/1-s2.0-S1877042815043578-main.pdf?\\_tid=6d7303ea-f4e5-42a0-9a78-f7af5fe4cc51&acdnat=1538371490\\_ec0575cddc7451c1735bee00444d5122](https://ac.els-cdn.com/S1877042815043578/1-s2.0-S1877042815043578-main.pdf?_tid=6d7303ea-f4e5-42a0-9a78-f7af5fe4cc51&acdnat=1538371490_ec0575cddc7451c1735bee00444d5122) (Sudaporn Arundee et. al., *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 197 (2015) 1107 – 1112).

development compass. SEP can be applied significantly in various contexts to avoid unbalanced growth, to advance human development, and to safe guard against the threats and dangers of globalization and industrialization<sup>12</sup>.

Following SEP, waste management can be guided in the direction of sustainable development, such as minimizing the use of natural resources, maximizing waste reuse, and use of recycling technologies<sup>13</sup>. SEP plays a significant role in achieving responsible consumption and production (SDG 12). SDG 12 is a key to decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation, and emphasizes the need for a shift from growth-focused economic models to circular economies<sup>9</sup>. SEP concept complements the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development Goals in the international arena<sup>14</sup>. Thailand has been able to build strategic partnerships, and encourages cooperation with other groups in the international community, through the concepts of “stronger together” and “not leaving anyone behind”<sup>14</sup> as mentioned in the Agenda 2030<sup>1</sup>.

With the above background, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Thailand (MoNRE), the Ministry of the Environment of the Government of Japan (MOEJ), and the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD) of Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) / UN DESA will co-organize the 9th Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific. The Forum will be held from 4 to 6 March 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand. The theme of the Forum is “**3R as a way for moving towards sufficiency economy – Implications for SDGs**”. The Forum will allow for strategic consideration to deliver outcomes of the Ha Noi 3R Declaration-Sustainable 3R Goals for Asia and the Pacific for 2013-2023<sup>15</sup>, which is also related to the various global agendas and agreements.

## 5. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the 9th Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific are:

- to address how the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP)<sup>14</sup> can contribute to 3R policies and strategies;
- to identify and discuss about the applications of SEP for the implementation of 3R policies and programmes;
- to address various environment, social and economic benefits of SEP in considering SDGs;
- to discuss the importance of 3R technologies and Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) for circular economy approach towards SDG 12; and
- to review and evaluate countries’ progress, initiatives, achievements and best practices in implementing the Ha Noi 3R Declaration – Sustainable 3R Goals for Asia and the Pacific for 2013-2023.

## 6. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

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<sup>14</sup> <http://thaiembdc.org/2017/06/05/from-the-sufficiency-economy-philosophy-to-sustainable-development-goals-june-2-2017/> (From the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy to Sustainable Development Goals June 2, 2017)

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.uncrd.or.jp/content/documents/659Hanoi-Declaration\\_Eng.pdf](http://www.uncrd.or.jp/content/documents/659Hanoi-Declaration_Eng.pdf) (Ha Noi 3R Declaration, 2013) Ninth Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific, 4-6 March 2019, Bangkok, Thailand

The 9th Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific will provide innovative solutions in terms of policy, institutional setups and partnership towards effective implementation of 3R and resource efficiency policies and strategies. The Forum will discuss the progress towards achieving the goals and targets of Ha Noi 3R Declaration (2013-2023)<sup>15</sup>, in addition to gaining policy and scientific insights in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals. It will also provide significant understanding of Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP)<sup>14</sup> which helps to increase effectiveness of sustainable use of natural resources and better management of natural resources for a better life of people in the community and to reduce environmental, social and economic impacts.

## **7. CO-ORGANIZERS**

The 9th Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific is hosted by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Thailand (MoNRE), and co-organized by the Ministry of the Environment, Government of Japan (MOEJ), and the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD) of the Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG) /United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA).

## **8. PARTNERS / SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS**

The 9th Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific is supported by a number of international and donor organizations such as - United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP); United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); Green Industries SA, Government of South Australia; The Global Sustainable Technology & Innovation Conference (G-STIC 2018); Institute of Global Environmental Strategies (IGES); Japan Society of Material Cycles and Waste Management (5th RINC); International Society of Waste Management, Air and Water (8th IconSWM); Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) and among others.

## **9. GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE**

Asia-Pacific countries - Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, the People's Republic of China, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Cook Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kiribati, the Republic of Korea, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nauru, Nepal, New Zealand, Niue, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Viet Nam.

## **10. PARTICIPANTS**

Participation in the Forum is by invitation only. Approximately 500 participants, including high-level government representatives from Asia-Pacific countries, city mayors, international experts, research institutes and resource persons, and others as listed below will attend the Forum:

- High level government representatives and policy makers from relevant Ministries such as Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Energy, and Ministry of Natural resources and Environment, etc.;

- City Mayors/Local Government representatives;
- Experts and international resource persons, including representatives of scientific and Research and Development (R&D) institutions in the areas of 3R/resource efficiency/waste management/life cycle assessment and management;
- Representatives of UN and international organizations, including international financial institutions, multi-lateral development banks and donor agencies;
- Representatives of the private and business sector and NGOs etc.

## 11. REGISTRATION

Participation in the UN Forum is free of charge. A limited number of travel supports will be available on a priority basis for nominated government representatives from the developing countries. Unless otherwise stated in the official invitation, the participants are requested to kindly cover their own travel, accommodation and all other incidental expenses through their organizations or external sponsorships.

## 12. LANGUAGE AND DOCUMENTATION

All documentation material will be in English. UNCRD will disseminate all documents and presentation material of the Forum on the Forum web link only. Please visit the Forum web link <http://www.uncrd.or.jp/?page=view&nr=1174&type=13&menu=198> for further information:

## 13. OFFICIAL PRE and PARALLEL EVENT

The 9th Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific will have several pre-event and parallel-event as follow:

### **Pre Event- 8<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Sustainable Waste Management (8<sup>th</sup> IconSWM 2018)**

**Date:** 22-24 November 2018

**Venue:** Acharya Nagarjuna University (ANU), Guntur, India

### **Pre Event- 3R International Scientific Conference on Material Cycles and Waste Management (5th 3RINCs)**

**Date:** 27 February -1 March 2019

**Venue:** Pullman Bangkok King Power, Thailand

### **Parallel Event-The Second Phase of State of the 3Rs in Asia and the Pacific**

**Date:** 5 March 2019

**Room:** Riverside 1 (2nd Floor)

## 14. INTERNATIONAL 3R EXHIBITION

**Dates:** 4-6 March 2019

**Room:** Riverside Room 5,6 and 7 (2nd Floor)

Companies wishing to promote technologies related to 3R and the recycling and resource recovery industry are encouraged to participate in the international exhibition. Representatives from environment departments and organizations are also welcome to showcase their activities. The exhibition will provide opportunities for business development and build new relationships on a local, national and global level. The specific guidelines for the exhibition will be shared soon.

## 15. CORRESPONDENCE

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