



United Nations Centre for
Regional Development



Ministry of Environment,
Kingdom of Cambodia



Ministry of the Environment,
Government of Japan

As of 01 February 2022

Provisional Concept Note of 11th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific

1. **DATE:** 08-10 February 2023
2. **VENUE:** Sokha Siem Reap Resort and Convention Center, Siem Reap, Cambodia
3. **THEME:** Integrating Circular Economy in Major Development Sectors towards Achieving Zero Waste Societies and the SDGs
4. **Format:** Mostly physical participation (to some extent hybrid)
5. **BACKGROUND**

Asia-Pacific has been the most dynamic region globally and most growth in resource use has been triggered by rapid urbanization and industrial transformation. The policy and scientific community in Asia and the Pacific have recognized the large challenges of resource supply security, increasing waste and pollution, climate change and increasing frequency and magnitude of natural disasters as critical constraints to future growth and rising material standards of living in the region.

The UN member countries are concurrently implementing a number of international agendas and agreements which are inter-linked and mutually reinforcing - such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the underlined SDGs, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the New Urban Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA), the Nairobi Mandate, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, among others. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs, in particular, not only call for equitable economic growth, but also provide an important political and implementation framework to implement 3R and resource efficiency to achieve circular economic development – an alternative economic growth model which is not at the expense of finite natural resources and ecological assets, rather it is regenerative.

3R and circular economy not only provide an important basis in achieving the SDG 12 (sustainable consumption and production) but also meaningful synergies in combinedly achieving the other SDGs such as SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), SDG 13 (combat climate change), SDG 11 (safe, resilient, sustainable cities and communities), and SDG 14 (life below water), among others.

UNCRD's 3R and circular economy initiative brings both the policy and scientific community to convene on an annual basis the Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia-Pacific to strengthen the science-policy interface in addressing 3R and resource efficiency as the basic for economic growth, pollution prevention and strengthening resilience of cities and communities, and after all, to achieve these international agendas and agreements. The adoption in 2015 of both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change established a foundation for the coherent implementation of climate action and sustainable development objectives across all levels and sectors¹. Globally, the waste management sector accounts for some 3.5% of anthropogenic GHG emissions². Many countries have adopted policies to reduce waste, recycle resources and secure landfills to reduce environmental and climate impacts. The United Nation's SDGs Report 2022³ states that unsustainable patterns of consumption and production are the root causes of the three-fold global crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. Such crises, and the resulting of the environmental degradation, threaten human well-being and the achievement of the SDGs. The report also highlights the urgent action necessary to achieve the SDGs and make meaningful progress for the people and the planet by 2030.

The UNEA-5 (Fifth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly)⁴ with theme of "Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals" also called for strengthened action to protect and restore nature and promote nature-based solutions to achieve the SDGs in its three complementary dimensions (social, economic and environmental). Similarly, the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2022⁵ focused on the impact of COVID-19 on the 2030 Agenda and actions to recover better while accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. To this regard, there is a need for all the member countries and citizens to seize the opportunity to work together to improve resource efficiency, reduce waste and pollution and shape a new circular economy.

Starting from the 6th Regional 3R Forum in Maldives (2015), circular economy approach has been mainstreamed in the policy discussions among the member countries. The 99 private tourist resorts of Maldives by signing the "Declaration by Private Tourist Resorts in Maldives for the Promotion of 3Rs and Resource Efficiency Towards Protection of Local Environment and Marine Ecosystem" underpinned the importance of science-policy-business in advancing 3R as an economic industry⁶. In the 7th 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 Development⁷. Furthermore, at the 8th Regional

¹ <https://enb.iisd.org/climate-sdgs-conference-2022-summary> (IISD Summary report, 20–21 July 2022 3rd Global Conference on Strengthening Synergies between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development)

² https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/climate_sdg_synergies_fact_sheet_5july_final.pdf (Factsheet, 3rd Global Conference on Strengthening Synergies between the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development)

³ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2022/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2022.pdf> (The Sustainable Development Report 2022)

⁴ <https://www.unep.org/environmentassembly/unea5> (UNEA-5, 28 Feb.-2 March 2022)

⁵ <https://hlpf.un.org/2022/documentation> (HLPF 2022, 6-15 July 2022)

⁶ <https://www.uncrd.or.jp/content/documents/3733FINAL-Male-Delcaration-Maldives-FINAL%20Version-12Oct2015.pdf> (Maldives National 3R Day 16th August 2015 Malé 3R Declaration, 5th Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific 2015)

⁷ <https://www.uncrd.or.jp/content/documents/4671Adelaide%203R%20Forum%20Declaration-FINAL%20CIRCULATION.pdf> (Adelaide 3R Declaration towards the Promotion of Circular Economy in

3R Forum held in India in April 2018, the participating Mayors and local authorities signed the voluntary and good-will Indore 3R Declaration of Asian Mayors on Achieving Clean Water, Clean Land and Clean Air in Cities⁸. In the 9th Regional 3R Forum in Thailand in March 2019, the member countries and participating cities agreed the Bangkok 3R Declaration Towards Prevention of Plastic Waste Pollution through 3R and Circular Economy⁹. Furthermore, the 10th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum (Series of Webinars)¹⁰ in November-December 2021, recognized the important role of eco-towns in advancing 3R and circular economy and highlighted the symbiotic material flow in eco-towns or eco-industrial parks as the basis for advancing 3R, resource efficiency and circular economy. Information presented at the annual Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum shows that several member countries are already undertaking 3R policy implementation and activities under the framework of Hanoi 3R Goals (2013-2023)¹¹ that support the global agendas and agreements.

With the above background, Ministry of Environment, Kingdom of Cambodia, 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 is co-organized the 11th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific (Hybrid) on 8-10 February 2023 Kingdom of Cambodia with the theme of **“Integrating Circular Economy in Major Development Sectors towards Achieving Zero Waste Societies and the SDGs”**. The 11th Forum will also provide an opportunity to discuss the on-going process of preparing the new declaration- 3rd Drafting committee meeting-cum-Experts Consultation on Pre-zero draft of new 3R and Circular Economy Declaration (2024-2034) and launch the pre-final version of ‘The Second State of 3Rs in Asia and the Pacific-Advancing Circular Economy in Asia and the Pacific Towards Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals’ Report.

6. OBJECTIVES/SCOPE/OUTCOMES

The objectives of the 11th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific are as follows:

- i. Discuss to accelerate integration of 3R and circular economy in major development sectors;
- ii. Discuss synergies in achieving the SDGs and the Paris Agreement on climate change through 3R and circular economy;
- iii. Discuss and share 3R and circular economy opportunities in achieving sustainable tourism and greening the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs);
- iv. Discuss the possibilities of implementing the circular economy principles with a view to protect and restore the Tonle-Sap ecosystem;

Achieving Resource Efficient Societies in Asia and the Pacific under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 7th Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific 2016)

⁸ <https://www.uncrd.or.jp/content/documents/6541Final%20Indore%203R%20Declaration-11April%202018.pdf> (Indore 3R Declaration of Asian Mayors on Achieving Clean Water, Clean Land and Clean Air in Cities, 8th Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific 2018)

⁹ <https://www.uncrd.or.jp/content/documents/7743Final-Bangkok%203R%20Declaration-adopted-11%20March%202019-Issued-without-formal-editing.pdf> (Bangkok 3R Declaration Towards Prevention of Plastic Waste Pollution through 3R and Circular Economy, 9th Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific 2019)

¹⁰ <https://www.uncrd.or.jp/Home?page=view&nr=1201&type=13&menu=198> (10th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific 2020)

¹¹ https://www.uncrd.or.jp/content/documents/659Hanoi-Declaration_Eng.pdf (Ha Noi 3R Declaration (2013-2023), Adopted during 4th Regional 3R Forum 2013).

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- v. Discuss various means to bridge the 3R infrastructure gap in achieving zero waste societies;
- vi. Review and assess country progress, initiatives, achievements, and best practices, including new policies and legislations, in implementing the Ha Noi 3R Declaration – Sustainable 3R Goals for Asia and the Pacific (2013-2023)¹¹;
- vii. Discuss the pre-zero draft of the new 3R and Circular Economy Declaration (2024-2034); and
- viii. Launch the pre-final version of ‘*The Second State of 3Rs in Asia and the Pacific- Advancing Circular Economy in Asia and the Pacific Towards Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*’.

7. CO-ORGANIZERS/ PARTNERS / SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

The 11th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific is co-organized by the Ministry of Environment, Kingdom of Cambodia, 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.

8. 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, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Viet Nam.

9. PARTICIPANTS

Participation in the Forum is by invitation only. Approximately 400 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; and
- Representatives of the private and business sector and NGOs etc.

10. 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.

11. 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 for further information: <https://www.uncrd.or.jp/>

12. OFFICIAL PRE-EVENTS AND PARALLEL-EVENTS

The 11th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum in Asia and the Pacific will have several pre-events and parallel events. The list is available in programme.

13. CONTACT POINTS/CORRESPONDENCE

Secretariat of the Regional 3R and Circular
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