

Annex I

Stricter environmental standards in the developing world

Latin America

As a result of the Stockholm Conference in 1972, many countries took steps to create or strengthen the public agencies responsible for managing renewable natural resources and the environment. -The Rio Conference in 1992 prompted most of the American countries to make new qualitative steps. Many of the countries, (e.g. Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Colombia) placed their authorities at the top of the political structure by creating environmental ministries. -The right to live on a clean and free of pollution environment as well as the obligation to carry on activities in an environmental sound way, is contained in the constitution of the majority of Latin American countries: e.g. Peru, Ecuador (1979) and Chile (1980).

Brazil: Many environmental laws applying to the agricultural sector are developed at the federal level, but also increasingly at state and local levels. - The National Environmental Legislation (No. 6. 6.938/81) defines targets, planning and application mechanisms of the national environmental policy. The recent Resolution no.237/97 requires approval of agricultural activities like livestock production if a certain size of production unit is exceeded; exploitation of wood and forestry by-products; and introduction of exotic and/or genetically modified species.⁷⁵

Mexico: General Law on Ecological Stability and Protection to the Environment. approved in 1996. Mexico has signed the following Rio Agreements: Rio Principles, Agenda 21, Framework Convention on Biological Diversity and Forest Principles.

Asia

Cambodia: Environmental protection law 1996

China: Various laws revised since 1991 on air, water solid waste, noise. - The 9th Five Year Plan (1996-2000) set out to halt environmental deterioration and begin to improve environmental quality in selected areas.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ U. Grote, Environmental standards in developing countries, p 6

⁷⁶ US Embassy Beijing, March 2001, p.1

Indonesia: With the respect to the use of forestland and palm oil production, various laws have been developed, especially in the last 5 years.⁷⁷

Laos PDR: 1999 Environmental Conservation and Protection law.

Malaysia: 1996:amendment to environment quality Act.

Mongolia: Laws on water and environmental protection (1995), air pollution (1996). Enacted legislation to ensure biodiversity conservation.

Philippines: EIA and EHIA in 1997. Enacted legislation to ensure biodiversity conservation.

Vietnam: Revised criminal law on environmental crimes in 2000. Vietnam is also an interesting case on improved implementation. Already in 1996 the Environmental Committee of Ho Chi Minh City, asked UNIDO to have a look at their "little black book" of the 42 most polluting factories in the city and suggest how the Cleaner Production (CP) concept might be applied as a cost-effective way of reducing the quantities of pollutants in waste water, and the volumes of the waste water itself, discharged into the environment, thereby reducing the investment needed for waste water treatment facilities. That done, the project moved on to phase II in 1998, with the selection of six companies as demonstration plants. They received assistance from national and international experts under the supervision and coordination of the Ho Chi Minh City Department of Science Technology and Environment (HCMC/DOSTE). Witnessing the benefits of the project at first hand had a big impact on the policy level and on DOSTE itself, which gradually gave more priority to CP as a complementary approach to pollution control options like wastewater treatment. The People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City allocated about US\$1 million to reduce pollution from 1000 companies in HCMC by 50% before 2000. This ambitious objective is included in the HCMC 2000 Plan. It includes three strategies: cleaner production, waste treatment and relocation of polluting industries from the city center to industrial zones. The main activity of the UNIDO project was six in-plant CP demonstrations in three different industrial sectors in HCMC: two pulp and paper companies, two textile factories and two food-processing plants. The impact on the environment was significant: wastewater discharges were reduced by between 20 to 66 percent; air emissions were reduced by between 30 to 70 percent and there was a reduction in solid waste generation of up to 27 percent. There was a substantial conservation of materials, energy, water and a reduction in the use of toxic materials. The impact on profits was just as impressive: For the two food

⁷⁷ U. Grote, Environmental standards in developing countries, p.8

processing firms, net annual savings of US\$660,000 were achieved for a total investment of US\$72,000, with a payback period of two months. For the two pulp and paper firms, net annual savings of US\$200,000 were achieved for a total investment of US\$104,000 with a payback period of four months. For the two textile firms, net annual savings of US\$115,000 were achieved for a total investment of US\$104,000 with a payback period of 14 months.⁷⁸

Singapore: Environmental Pollution Control Act.

⁷⁸ UNIDO