

PRESS RELEASE

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Nations, regions will advance sustainable development

**Case studies from Asia, Europe and other regions
underscore pivotal role of national and regional bodies**

20 June, RIO DE JANEIRO – World leaders converge today in Brazil two decades after the first Earth Summit in the city. Unless leaders decide on fundamental changes during the three-day summit, negotiators and civil society expect at least a roadmap on institutional reforms and goals. To complement the UN talks, [two expert panels](#) organised by the Asia-Europe Environment Forum and its partners explored solutions from the ground up.

‘While global efforts are being discussed, national mechanisms have gone farther for environmental justice in countries like Hungary,’ said Dr. Sándor Fülöp, Hungarian Deputy Commissioner for Fundamental Rights who was also once Ombudsman for Future Generations. ‘At the national level, moreover, sustainable development needs to be mainstreamed in over-all development planning through genuine teamwork among government agencies and civil society stakeholders,’ said Prof. Cielito Habito. Habito, from the Philippines, was the Chairman of the first national council for Sustainable Development created in Asia immediately after the Rio summit in 1992.

‘Regional organisations fulfill a key role supporting efforts of member countries to tackle common issues more effectively, by facilitating cooperation and knowledge sharing and allowing long-term networking to take root’ remarked Dr. David Stanners, the European Environment Agency’s Head of International Cooperation. ‘Regional bodies support national and sub-national efforts through development financing and capacity building,’ stated Dr. Nessim Ahmad, a director for Regional and Sustainable Development at the Asian Development Bank.

The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) and its partners mapped national and regional mechanisms in Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) countries in a new study [Global Architectures for Sustainable Development Delivery](#). ‘ASEM heads of state and government will convene this November in Laos, where global affairs such as the Rio+20 outcomes are expected to be advanced,’ commented Ms. Sol Iglesias, Director for Intellectual Exchange at ASEF.

The study is an initiative under the Asia-Europe Environment Forum, a strategic partnership of the ASEF, the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies of Japan, the Hanns Seidel Foundation and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The Rio+20 side events were organised with the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe, the Earth Council, the Regional Resource Centre for Asia and the Pacific at the Asian Institute of Technology, and the ASEM SMEs Eco-Innovation Center.



Asia-Europe Foundation

The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) promotes greater mutual understanding between Asia and Europe through intellectual, cultural and people-to-people exchanges. Through ASEF, civil society concerns are included as a vital component of deliberations of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), which currently comprises of 46 member states plus the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat (www.aseminfoboard.org) ASEF was established in February 1997 by the participating governments of ASEM and has since engaged over 17,000 direct participants through more than 550 projects in the realms of economy and society, environment, education, public health, arts and culture, human rights and governance, and inter-communal dialogue. www.asef.org

In 2012, ASEF is commemorating its 15th Anniversary and invites everyone to take part in celebrating **Connected Histories, Shared Future.**
