Youths propose sustainable development tool in ASEM

By Lee Joo-hee
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HANOI — Young professionals of the Asia-Europe Meeting’s partner-countries have proposed member governments set up a mechanism to coordinate sustainable development.

In closing a four-day youth forum on sustainable development in Hanoi this week, some 60 participants from 23 countries also called on ASEM governments to develop quantifiable national indicators for sustainable development. When made available publicly, these would serve as benchmarks to monitor the impact of national sustainable development strategies.

These and other proposals were released in the “Youth Statement on Sustainable Development” issued Thursday when the forum ended in the Vietnamese capital.

The meeting, which kicked off Monday, held a series of working committee meetings and discussions on how to achieve durable development that would raise the living standards of all countries.

The statement was passed at the closing ceremony to Vu Khoan, deputy prime minister of Vietnam, which will host the ASEM summit in October this year.

“This is a very important event in a way that it is an expression of support from youth to ASEM and to Vietnam as the host of the ASEM summit,” he said. “I will convey the statement to all participating ASEM countries.”

Arranged by the Asia-Europe Foundation along with the Vietnam Young Federation, the forum was the third annual gathering of young professionals working for government or civil organizations in ASEM member countries, and their dialogue concentrated on devising ways for the two continents to collaborate on sustainable development.

Calls for sustainable development have been rising over the years as poverty gaps between developed and developing countries remained wide while the environment suffered rapid damage.

Participants called on ASEM to alleviate poverty, spread equal education, save the environment, adopt efficient waste management, stimulate youth employment and promote community-based eco-tourism.

“We all have the responsibility, as national borders have no meaning when it comes to sustainable development,” said Sami Koitola of Finland, speaking on behalf of other participants.

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