Category: Obligation to Provide Access to Legal Remedies

Sub-Category: Judicial Networking and Training

Name of Good Practice: **Asian Judges Symposium on Environmental Decision Making, the Rule of Law, and Environmental Justice and the Asian Judges Network on Environment**

Key Words: Access to Justice, Consultation, Network, Regional, Symposium, Training

Implementing Actors: International Organisation: Asian Development Bank, Asian Judges Network on Environment

Location: Asia

Description: In July 2010, the Asian Development Bank hosted the first of three Asian Judges Symposiums on Environmental Decision Making, the Rule of Law, and Environmental Justice. Around 120 senior judges, environment ministry officials, members of civil society, and experts in environmental law discussed ways to promote environment protection through effective environmental adjudication and law enforcement. Attendees shared information on the challenges faced by the judiciary when deciding cases involving environmental issues. Participants also discussed specialized courts and procedures for environmental cases, giving the group a broader understanding of good practices. According to the final outcome document, “the Symposium emphasized improving environmental and natural resource decision making and adjudication within Asian judiciaries, without assuming that any particular form or structure is the best way in any particular country context.” One of the main conclusions from the Symposium was that “there is a need for a judicial network on the environment. Issues in environmental cases transcend national boundaries, and thus there is a need to share information, experience, and best practices on identical issues faced by judges across the region.”

A key outcome of the symposium was the creation of the Asian Judges Network on Environment (AJNE), which serves as an information and experience sharing arrangement among senior judges of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). At the 2010 Symposium, Judges “expressed enthusiasm for an informal trans-governmental network that would foster closer ties among members over shared issues and challenge and ultimately, facilitate judicial capacity-building through sustained multilateral exchanges.” The AJNE has its own website that provides information on, among other things: events, roundtables and other meetings pertaining to access to justice and the environment; a video library of important talks; and a database of domestic environmental laws throughout Asia.

**Further Information:** the AJNE’s website is: <http://www.asianjudges.org/>. The final outcome document from the 2010 Symposium is available at: <http://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/29631/symposium-environmental-decisions-law-justice.pdf>.