

SOUTH ASIAN SEAS PROGRAMME

Agenda Item 5 (i)

PROGRAMME AREA: Coastal Clean Up

BACKGROUND

The 3rd week of September is observed globally as the International Coastal Clean up Day and South Asian Countries has been observing this day since 2006, with activities coming under the Marine Litter Programme.

The major player in the region has been the Government of India and to a lesser extent the other 4 member states of SAS

The International Coastal Clean up Day was jointly organised in India by SACEP / SAS, The Indian Coast Guard and the National Institute of Ocean Technology, Chennai on 16th September 2007

The International Coastal Cleanup Day 2007 (ICC Day 2007) was successfully organized in all coastal areas of India. The event was a grand success.

The Government of India appointed Dr. R. Venkatesan, Group Head, Ocean Science and Technology for Islands, National Institute of Ocean Technology, Chennai, as the national consultant for the UNEP-SACEP/SAS. The Ministry of Defence on the other hand appointed the Indian Coast Guard as the coordinating agency for the event since environment protection is one of the statutory duties of the Coast Guard. These two agencies coordinated the programme at the national level.

At the local level, Prof. D. Sudarsanam of Loyola College, Chennai coordinated the educational institutions in the coastal cleanup and other related activities. The Tree Foundation is the other coordinating organisation in Chennai, which is actively involved in the protection and conservation of marine mammals and turtles along the south Chennai beaches. The four organizations have been active in the conduct of the programme.

The SACEP Indian consultant had sent nearly 7000 letters and emails to many central and state governmental departments and non-governmental organizations to support this event in their respective coastal areas. The Indian Coast Guard organized a national level coordination meeting at Chennai on 6 September wherein the national level coordination of the ICC day activities were finalized.

In addition, Indian Coast Guard communicated to various governmental departments to issue official circulars asking the respective coastal district administration to organize this event. Hence, complete micro level planning and initiatives were taken. The press and media covered this event and requested the public to come together for this national and international cause. This has motivated many citizens to come forward on their own to join hands with the coordinating agencies.

As part of the programme, the message of the coastal cleanup campaign was communicated through email, letter, pamphlet, banner, radio, television, and through official orders issued by the government to their regional/district offices.

A large representation of volunteers / participants from the Indian Army, Navy, Coast Guard, Air Force, Central Industrial Security Force, Police, various government organizations, non-governmental organizations, large number of corporate companies and educational institutions participated on that day. Representatives from two major ports - Chennai Port and Ennore Port, actively participated in this event.

Marine Litter Data

The data on marine litter received so far from different parts of Chennai and other adjoining areas shows that the major part (more than 50%) of the debris is related to the activities of shoreline and recreation, followed by ocean/waterway, smoking-related, dumping and medical /personal hygiene related. The total number of litter collected on International Coastal Cleanup Day 2007 in these areas amount to more than 1.4 lakhs.

ICC Day 2007 Highlights - India

No. of participants = 19,398

No. of litter collected = 1,49,730*

(*The total weight of this litter along with the non-segregated marine litter was estimated to be about 71 tonnes)

PARTICIPATION IN OTHER MEMBER COUNTRIES

The other member countries of SAS also observed the International Coastal Clean up Day in September 2007..

It is hoped that all member countries continue to celebrate the International Coastal Clean up day and observe this day on a bigger scale to spread more awareness about Marine Litter