

SOUTH ASIAN SEAS PROGRAMME

Agenda Item 5 (1)

PROGRAMME AREA: Basel Convention Regional Centre

CONTEXT & BACKGROUND

Establishment of Basel Convention Regional Centre for South Asia

South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), with the help of its member countries was able to get the decision at the CoP8 of the Basel Convention to establish a Basel Convention Regional Centre for South Asia at the SACEP Secretariat.

The 10th Governing Council of SACEP agreed for the SACEP Secretariat, Colombo, Sri Lanka to host the Basel Convention Regional Centre for South Asia.

As per the CoP decision VIII/3 of the Basel Convention, SACEP prepared a detailed proposal (Annex I) and a report of the feasibility study (Annex II) and submitted to the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) of the Basel Convention at its sixth meeting held from 3 to 7 September 2007. As the Government of India acceded the request of the SACEP at the 10th GC to deputize its experts on various fields on specific requests by SACEP to better programme establishment, the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India was kind enough to provide the services of its expert to prepare the two documents.

It was discussed at the OEWG meeting and the many countries including SACEP member countries as well as European Union supported to the proposal. Government of Russia kept the reservation saying that there are many BCRCs already established. SACEP countered the argument and said that South Asia has its unique problems of managing hazardous waste and the region is having one fifth of world's population. BCRC at Iran also raised some concerns regarding the participating countries.

The OEWG of the Basel Convention at its 6th meeting agreed to review both the detailed proposal and the feasibility study report and put up to the CoP9 of the Basel Convention which will be held on June 2008 for its consideration.

After the OEWG meeting, SACEP have communicated with the concerned parties who raised some concerns at the OEWG meeting and received replies from two BCRCs, Iran and Indonesia

SACEP will be requesting that the 11th Meeting of the Governing Council of SACEP adopt the following decision on establishment of Basel Convention Regional Centre for South Asia at the SACEP Secretariat, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

“We the members of the 11th meeting of the Governing Council of SACEP and the Environment Ministers of the South Asian countries fully support to the establishment Basel Convention Regional Centre for South Asia at the SACEP Secretariat, Colombo, Sri Lanka and decided that all South Asian countries will be members of this Centre at SACEP as decided by the 10th Meeting of the Governing Council.”