

SOUTH ASIAN SEAS PROGRAMME

Agenda Item 5 (q)

PROGRAMME AREA: Management Issues of SAS Action Plan

OBJECTIVE:

Revision of the South Asian Seas Action Plan

A) BACKGROUND

1. Based on the decisions of a High Level Meeting of Officials convened in Colombo, 18 - 21 February 1981 the coastal and island States of the South Asian Seas decided that within the context of the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP), a Regional Seas Programme should be developed.
2. In response the tenth session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in May 1982, requested the Executive Director in decision 10/20 "*...to enter into consultation with the concerned States of the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) to ascertain their views regarding the conduct of a Regional Seas Programme in the South Asian Seas*".
3. On the basis of this decision the Executive Director appointed a high level consultant between October-November 1982 and in February 1983 to visit the five member States of SACEP¹ in order to: (a) consult with Governments with a view to assessing each State's interest in participating in a future regional programme; (b) seek the Governments' views on the relationship between the SACEP and UNEP's Regional Seas Programme; (c) discuss the steps to be followed which may most successfully lead to identification of the South Asian Seas as a regional seas area and subsequent adoption of an action plan; and (d) respond to queries, as well as provide clarification regarding UNEP's Regional Seas Programmes. The report of the mission was sent to the Governments of the South Asian Seas region in May 1983.
4. On the basis of the mission's findings, the Executive Director submitted recommendations on the possible follow-up actions to the eleventh session of the Governing Council. The Governing Council on 24 May 1983, by its decision 11/7, noted "*...the consultation carried out in accordance with the Council decision 10/20 of 31 May 1982...*" and requested "*..the Executive Director to designate the South Asian Seas as a region to be included in the regional seas programme, in close co-operation with the South Asia Co-operative Environmental Programme and the Governments of the region, and to assist in the formulation of a plan of action for the environmental protection of the South Asian Seas.*".
5. In response to decision 11/7 of the General Council the Executive Director of UNEP, in close co-operation with the Governments of the region, some international organisations and SACEP, convened a number of meetings and initiated various activities.
6. One such activity undertaken was as follows:

¹ **The coastal and island States participating in the South Asian Seas Action Plan are: Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.**

- (a) The preparation of country reports by the Governments, with the assistance of UNEP and SACEP, addressing and reviewing:
- ✚ national environmental problems defined as priority areas or regional concern;
 - ✚ activities which may usefully be carried out under the Action Plan to resolve or mitigate these problems; and
 - ✚ national institutional and manpower resources which are, or may be, involved in dealing with these problems, including the identification of the need to strengthen their capabilities.
- (b) A report on the State of the Marine Environment in the South Asian Seas Region (UNEP Regional Seas Reports & Studies No. 123), based on the country reports,

These reports were the basis of for the development of the South Asian Seas Action Plan which was adopted at a Plenipotentiaries Meeting held in March 1995 in New Delhi

B) PROPOSAL

- a) It is 23 years since the South Asian Seas Action Plan was adopted and in the light of the current developments ,the Secretariat is of the opinion that it is opportune to initially review the existing action plan and identify new areas for inclusion in the present Action Plan

C) METHOD

1. On an agreed terms of reference and based on the previous country reports, the preparation of National Reports on the Status and Environmental Problems of the Marine and Coastal Areas of Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka by Government identified National Consultants
2. Based on these reports, the Preparation of a State of the Marine Environment of the South Asian Seas Region by a Regional Consultant
3. Based on the above, identify fresh priority areas for inclusion in the South Asian Seas Action Plan to be adopted at by the member countries at a Special Meeting of the Inter Ministerial Meeting to be convened in the March 2009

WORK PLAN

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| Finalisation of Proposal with UNEP Nairobi and Signing of MOU | UNEP & SAS Secretariat |
| Agreeing on the Contents of the Country Report and State of the Marine Environment in the South Asian Seas Region | UNEP & SAS Secretariat |
| Identification of National Consultants and Preparation of National Reports | National Focal Points |
| Identification of International / Regional Consultant | UNEP & SAS Secretariat |
| Submission of Country Reports to SAS Secretariat and UNEP | National Focal Points |
| Preparation of State of the Marine Environment in the South Asian Seas Region and a Draft Revised South Asian Seas Action Plan | Regional Consultant |
| Submission of Draft State of the Marine Environment in the South Asian Seas Region and a Draft Revised South Asian Seas Action Plan to SAS & UNEP | Regional Consultant |
| Review of State of the Marine Environment in the South Asian Seas Region and the Draft Revised South Asian Seas Action Plan by UNEP and SAS | SAS Secretariat & UNEP |
| Submission of State of the Marine Environment in the South Asian Seas Region and the Draft Revised South Asian Seas Action Plan to Special IMM of SAS | SAS Secretariat |
| Printing of State of the Marine Environment in the South Asian Seas Region to 5th IMM of SAS | UNEP & SAS Secretariat |

BUDGET IN US \$

The proposed time frame is 12 months to be completed by middle of 2009 and the financial outlay is estimated to be US \$ 100,000.

We have sought in principle a commitment from UNEP, Nairobi for assistance in the form of technical guidance and part financial assistance in the undertaking of this activity. It is expected that member states too will have to support this activity.