



South Asia Co-operative
Environment Programme



SACEP

2019

ANNUAL REPORT

South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) is an inter-governmental organization, established in 1982 by the governments of South Asia to promote and support protection, management and enhancement of the environment in the region



146/24A, Havelock Road
Colombo 05, Sri Lanka.



Tel : +94 11 2596443
Fax: +94 11 2589369



info@sacep.org
www.sacep.org



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For copies of the report, write to:

South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP)

146/24A, Havelock Road

Colombo 05

Sri Lanka

Tel : +94 11 2596443

Fax : +94 11 2589369

Web : www.sacep.org

Table of Contents

Page

01 Message from the Director General

Introduction

02 An Introduction to SACEP and SASP

Governance

04 15th SACEP Governing Council Meeting and 6th Inter-governmental Meeting of ...

05 South Asia Roadmap for Sustainable Waste Management and Resource Circulation

06 South Asia Report on Waste Management

07 Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Strategy for South Asia

08 Regional Marine Litter Action Plan

09 SACEP Strategy 2020 – 2030

10 Resolution on Sustainable Public Procurement

11 The 130th Meeting of the Consultative Committee of SACEP

12 The 131st Meeting of the Consultative Committee of SACEP

Programmes and Activities

13 Bio-Diversity

15 Waste Management

15 First Sub-Regional workshop on Preparation of status Report and Sub-Regional Roadmap...

16 Second Sub-Regional workshop on Preparation of status Report and Sub-Regional Roadmap...

17 Third Sub-Regional workshop on Preparation of status Report and Sub-Regional Roadmap...

18 Adaptation to Climate Change

19 Regional Workshop on Advancing Nationally Determined Contributions in South Asia

20 Nitrogen Management

21 UNEA Resolution on Sustainable Nitrogen Management

22 South Asia Nitrogen Hub

24 Marine Environment

24 Reducing threats to Coral Reef from Land-based Pollution in Sri Lanka and the SA Region

25 Ratification of the 1996 Protocol to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution...

26 Marine Litter Action Plan

26 Ballast Water Management

27 Glo-Fouling Project

27 International Coastal Clean-up day

28 Plastic Free Rivers and Seas for South Asia

Visiting SACEP member countries

29 Visiting SACEP member countries

Contributions to other regional and international activities

35 SACEP's Contributions to other regional and international activities

Public Awareness

40 Public Awareness

40 SACEP launched new website

41 Educate the World Programme

Message from the Director General



Dr. Abas Basir
Director General
South Asia Co-operative
Environment Programme

The year 2019 was a successful year for SACEP. During this year, SACEP conducted many activities in capacity building and policy dialogue with government officials of member countries and other environmental stakeholders, developing and promoting new policies and good practices for sustainable development and for public/stakeholder involvement, implementing ministerial mandates and contributing to international processes. Much of these efforts have been in the thematic areas of Biodiversity Conservation, Sustainable Consumption and Production, Air and water pollution with trans-boundary implications, Coastal and Marine Environment, Climate Change, and Environmental Planning, Policy and Law. SACEP also contributed to the regional and global efforts to protection and management of the environment by actively participating in regional and global environmental forums and sharing its knowledge and experiences in the field.

The current and emerging national, regional and global environmental issues would require more strategic responses than ever before to safe guard our prestigious environment. In responding to these challenges, SACEP will continue, with even greater determination, to pursue its mission and maintain its focus on supporting its beneficiaries and responding to the needs of its member countries, working in a spirit of innovation to strengthen solutions in South Asia Region. Established 39 years ago, SACEP has now emerged as one of the leading regional organizations of international character with global impacts.

At the end, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Members states for their continued supports, engagement and leadership. It is only through them that we can shape environment protection and natural resources conservation in the region. It is only through them that we can raise our voice in the globe. SACEP is also grateful to its international partners for their increased technical and financial supports during the year 2019, setting a new record in the SACEP 39-year history.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of stylized initials and a surname, enclosed within an oval shape.

Dr. Abas Basir
Director General

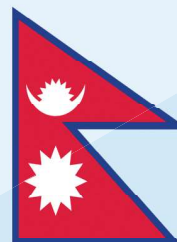
Introduction



An Introduction to SACEP and SASP

On the initiative of a number of countries in South Asia together with the United Nations Environment Programme, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (UNEP-ROAP), an Inter-Governmental Expert Group Meeting was held in Bangalore, India in March 1980 to discuss the advantages of working co-operatively for the conservation of resources and the wise environmental management. In accordance with the recommendations of the Bangalore Meeting, a High-level Meeting to establish the 'South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP)' was held in February 1981 in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

This Ministerial Meeting approved the Colombo Declaration and the Articles of Association for the establishment of SACEP and it became a legal entity on 9th February 1982 when the minimum required number of countries ratified the Articles of Association of SACEP and up to date eight countries, namely; Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have become members of the organization. SACEP has its Secretariat in Colombo and is enlisted as a Specialized Agency of the United Nations & Other Agencies under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka.



SACEP is registered with the Secretariat of the United Nations as a Multilateral Organization in accordance with Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations. SACEP is also the Secretariat for the South Asian Seas Programme (SASP), which is one of the eighteen Regional Seas Programmes of UNEP and Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are the Member States of the Programme. Since 1983 SACEP served as the Secretariat for SASP and was formally adopted at a Meeting of Plenipotentiaries held in New Delhi, India on 24 March 1995 and the Action Plan came into force in January 1997. Hosting & co-ordinating regional arms of international programmes and activities, is a major role played by SACEP.

The Mission of SACEP is to promote regional co-operation in South Asia in the field of environment, both natural and human in the context of sustainable development and on issues of economic and social development which also impinge on the environment and vice versa; to support conservation and management of natural resources of the region and to work closely with all national, regional, and international

institutions, governmental and non-governmental, as well as experts and groups engaged in such co-operation and conservation efforts. SACEP's programme activities are promoted within an agreed frame work of regional co-operation for environmental sound Sustainable Development.

During the 39 years of its existence, SACEP in collaboration with various partner organizations had implemented a number of programmes in the field of air pollution, biodiversity, climate change, coastal and marine environment, data and information management, environmental education, environmental law, environmentally sustainable transport, multi-lateral environmental agreements, waste management etc.

15th Governing Council of SACEP, held in November 2019 in Dhaka, Bangladesh, identified biodiversity, climate change, air and water quality, waste management, sustainable consumption and production, costal and marine environment, and environmental governance as SACEP priority areas of activities and it is mandated to mostly focus on these areas.



Governance



15th SACEP Governing Council Meeting and 06th Inter-governmental Meeting of Ministers of SASP

The 15th Meeting of SACEP Governing Council and the 6th Inter-governmental Meeting of the Ministers of the South Asia Seas Programme were held on 6th November 2019, in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The meetings started its work by a statements made by Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, Foreign Minister, Government of Bangladesh, Md. Shahab Udden, Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of Bangladesh, Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, Out- going Chair of SACEP GC, Mr. Idrees Malyar, Deputy Director General of National Environmental Protection Agency, Government of Afghanistan and H.E. Shah Faisal Kakar, Out-going Chair IMM, Government of Pakistan.

Director General of SACEP Dr. Abas Basir at his opening remarks welcomed the dignitaries and the delegates of the member countries for the 15th Governing Council of SACEP and invited the dignitaries to join hands for successful deliberations. He also thanked Government of Bangladesh for hosting these meetings.

During these Meetings, Environment Ministers and the high- level officials from 8 member countries and also SACEP international partners including UN agencies, addressed the daunting environmental challenges of today and adopted SACEPs' and SASP work programmes for the year 2020-2021, SACEP Strategy for the year 2020-2030, South Asia Roadmap towards Sustainable Waste Management and Resource Circulation. The meeting also adopted a declaration on Sustainable Public Procurement, Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Strategy for South Asia, and the Regional Marine Litter Action Plan for the Region.

The 15th Meeting of the Governing Council of SACEP and the 6th Inter-governmental Meeting of Ministers Meeting of South Asia Seas Programme were preceded by 3 days meetings of National Focal Points, which came with specific recommendations for the 15th GC and 6th IMM meetings. All of these recommendations were endorsed by the 15th GC and 6th IMM.



South Asia Roadmap for Sustainable Waste Management and Resource Circulation

Development of the South Asia Roadmap for Sustainable Waste Management and Resource Circulation is a result of an intensive consultation process facilitated by South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) in collaboration with the IGES Center Collaborating with UNEP on Environmental Technologies (CCET) and was supported by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/IETC and the Ministry of Environment, Japan (MOEJ). The roadmap involves all eight-member countries in South Asia.

In order to develop the Road Map initially basic data were collected from member countries followed by consultative meetings arranged involving relevant representatives from member countries and other key stakeholders, including international agencies, research/academic institutions, private/business sectors and civil society groups.

This roadmap sets the sub-regional policy framework, including clear targets and practical measures towards achieving sustainable waste and resource management in South Asia. It identifies an enabling environment to motivate countries to take actions to achieve those targets. It also stresses the importance of networking, knowledge and technology sharing and mutual learning among member countries to facilitate successful transformation towards sustainable waste and resource management in the sub-region.

The 15th Meeting of the Governing Council of SACEP reviewed and adopted the Sub-regional Roadmap developed for implementing the Global Waste Management Goals towards addressing SDGs in South Asia which will be implemented nationally among the member countries of SACEP.



South Asia Report on Waste Management

This report was developed as a part of a joint co-ordination between South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), IGES Center Collaborating with UNEP on Environmental Technologies (CCET), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in collaboration with the national focal points of 8 SACEP member countries, namely Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, and is aimed at informing the development of South Asia's sub-regional roadmap, which would guide the improvement of waste management through policy cooperation at a sub-regional level.

The report examines the state of waste management in 8 countries in South Asia sub-region, focusing first on the key drivers of waste generation including population growth, urbanization and economic growth, followed by an overview of waste generation, waste management practices adopted, economics of waste management, and the governance aspect of the waste management system in each countries.

Challenges were identified and recommendations put forward based on the analysis, which mainly focuses on municipal solid waste (MSW), but also emerging waste streams such as industrial waste, medical waste, e-waste, as well as marine and coastal plastics.

Data employed in the publication were mainly drawn from the result of the country survey conducted among the National Focal Points of SACEP member countries in South Asia which is also complemented by various literature previously published by governments.



Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Strategy for South Asia

The Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Strategy (MCBS) for the South Asian Seas region was developed by SACEP in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the five South Asian Seas countries and other partners.

The Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Strategy sets the preliminary regional visions, goals and targets for the region. The MCBS document provides a framework for cooperation and collaboration amongst the five maritime countries of South Asia and other stakeholders, for the application of ecosystem-based approaches in managing coastal

and marine resources, that ensure the conservation of biodiversity and safeguard ecosystem services for the wellbeing and poverty reduction of the people of South Asia.

The MCBS is developed around six Regional Targets which are based on six main Goals for the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems in the SAS region. A set of Regional Actions are also being prepared for each target, along with Performance Indicators to measure progress, in addition to potential Partnerships that will support the implementation of the MCBS in the SAS region.



Regional Marine Litter Action Plan

Marine litter has become a serious national, regional and global challenge and has significantly impacted not only to the marine and coastal environment, but also to the economy and human health.

To address this multidimensional challenge and with a view to mitigate the increase of marine litter and microplastic, SACEP on the request of SAS member countries and with the assistance of the UNEP-GPA, initiated the development of Marine Litter Action Plan for South Asia region. It was developed based on the national consultation processes and national reports and recommendations made by the regional consultative workshops.

The Marine Litter Action Plan includes the marine litter management strategies, challenges and opportunities and the way forward. The Action Plan provides that SAS member countries do not possess any consolidated marine litter database nor does any indicators available for such database. SAS member countries also do not possess any legal framework for regulating the

marine litter. Lack of research, education and awareness on marine litter, poor institutional system and lack of marketing and economic instruments for marine litter management are among the obstacles that hinder any useful mitigation measure at national and regional level.

After identifying the gaps, the Action Plan provides specific measures and actions as a way forward in mitigating marine litter in SAS region, which includes but not limited to establishment and revamping of the instructional structure/system, establishment of new legal system and guidelines, undertaking research and innovation to determine the total quantity of marine litter coming in to the coastal area, conducting education and awareness programmes, and involving private sector and civil society organization in waste management.

This Action Plan will greatly help SACEP maritime member countries in addressing this emerging challenge in the SAS region



SACEP Strategy 2020 – 2030

SACEP Strategy 2020 – 2030 is a long-term strategy which will determine SACEP's programme activities for the next 10 years. The strategy was built on taking into consideration of the decisions made by SACEP Governing Council at its previous sittings, SACEP's own experiences of coordinating and assisting the region's environment protection efforts over the years as well as from its needs advancing forward, Post 2015 South Asia Development Agenda, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development including its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and Paris Agreement on Climate Change. This strategy consists six Goals and together these goals define the core priorities and focus of SACEP for the next ten years. Each goal specifies a number of outcomes. While each goal is a key focus in its own right, all six are closely interrelated.

It has been more than a decade since the last strategy adopted by SACEP and there are many changes taken place in the areas of national, regional and global environment concerns and priorities which requires new policies and

strategies to overcome the new challenges. By adopting this strategy at the 15th meeting of the Governing Council of SACEP fulfilled the long overdue requirement and through this strategy, SACEP will be able to address current environmental challenges of the region effectively.



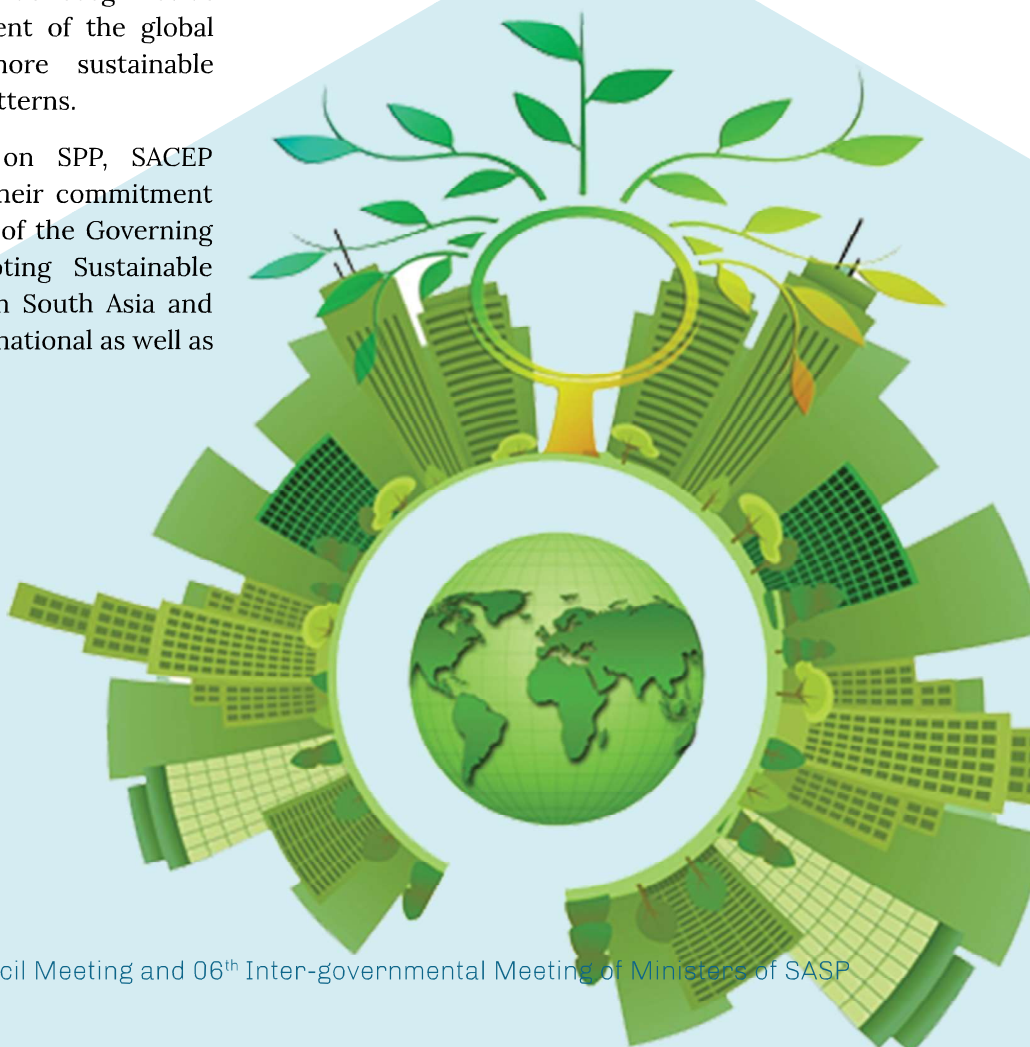
Resolution on Sustainable Public Procurement

Public procurement wields enormous purchasing power, accounting for up to 30 percent of GDP in many developing countries. Leveraging this purchasing power by buying more sustainable goods and services can help drive markets in the direction of sustainability, reduce the negative impacts of an organization, and also produce positive benefits for the environment and society. The SDGs have reiterated the strong link between environmental protection, sustainable development, and public procurement. SDG 12.7 focuses specifically on the promotion of “public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities”.

The advancement of sustainable public procurement (SPP) practices is thus recognized as being a key strategic component of the global efforts towards achieving more sustainable consumption and production patterns.

By adopting the Resolution on SPP, SACEP member countries reaffirmed their commitment made at the previous meetings of the Governing Council of SACEP on promoting Sustainable Consumption and Production in South Asia and emphasized the need to initiate national as well as

regional awareness building and training programs and build training resources to promote SPP on a programmatic basis. It urged SACEP to play a role of regional coordinator in building national capacities on policies and action plans on SPP. While encouraging countries to identify and involve key relevant stakeholders, including governments, private sector and civil society in SPP through national and regional consultations/workshops, invited bilateral and multilateral development partners to extend financial support for capacity-building activities, including demonstration and pilot projects, as well as for the development and implementation of policies, strategies, and action plans related to SPP in SACEP member countries.



The 130th Meeting of the Consultative Committee of SACEP

The 130th Meeting of the Consultative Committee of SACEP was held on 30th January 2019 at SACEP Secretariat successfully.

Dr. Abas Basir, Director General of SACEP thanked H.E. Prof. Bishwambher Pyakuryal, Ambassador, Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal and the out-going Chairman of the Consultative Committee of SACEP for the leadership, guidance and advice provided for the affairs of SACEP during his tenure as the Chairman and welcomed H.E. Dr. Shahid Ahmad Hashmat, High Commissioner of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the new Chairman of the Consultative Committee of SACEP and assured the fullest support and cooperation. The members of the Consultative Committee of SACEP reaffirmed their commitment towards SACEP to serve the South Asian countries to achieve its mandate.



The 131st Meeting of the Consultative Committee of SACEP

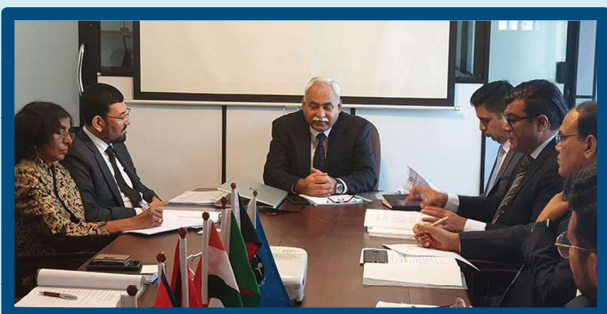


The 131st Meeting of the Consultative Committee of SACEP was held on 6th August 2019 at the Secretariat.

The meeting was attended by the Ambassadors / High Commissioners and Senior Diplomats of the Member States residing in Colombo. Dr. Abas Basir, Director General welcomed and thanked the Chairman and the members of the Consultative Committee for the continued support extended to SACEP for implementation of its Governing Council decisions.



The objective of the meeting was to discuss the facilitation of the forthcoming 15th Meeting of the Governing Council of SACEP to be held in Dhaka, Bangladesh on the first week of November year 2019. The meeting also highlighted the importance of regional measures in addressing the emerging environmental challenges, particularly of climate change.



Programmes and Activities



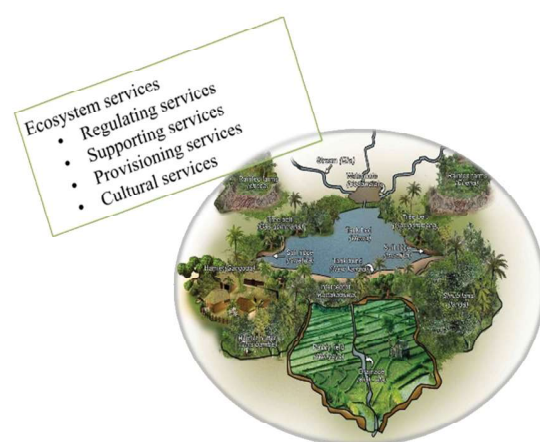
Bio-Diversity

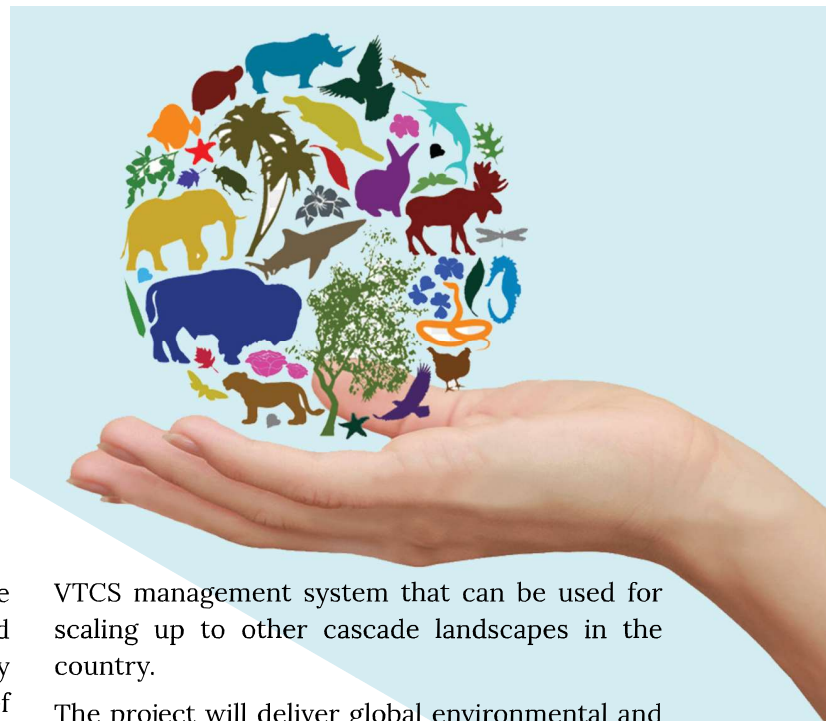
Healthy Landscapes: Managing Agricultural Landscapes in Socio-ecologically Sensitive Areas to Promote Food Security, Well-being and Ecosystem Health in Sri Lanka.

The project on Healthy Landscapes: Managing agricultural landscapes in socio-ecologically sensitive areas to promote food security, well-being and ecosystem health in Sri Lanka is a GEF/UNE funded project under the Ministry of Mahaweli Development and Environment which is planned to be implemented from 2019 to 2022.

The Main Objective of this project is to realize health and environmental co-benefits of the village Tank Cascade Systems (VTCS) through managing the agricultural landscapes better to promote food security, wellbeing of People, ecosystem health and maintaining biodiversity better.

Sri Lanka possesses a very unique ancient man-made irrigation system which sustained for centuries and serves the multiple functions for the society. The main features of the ancient irrigation systems of Sri Lanka were the intricate networks of small to very large reservoirs (wewa or tanks) connected through a series of feeder canals which brought water for yearlong rice cultivation in the dry zone. These irrigation systems with large number of interconnected reservoirs are believed to have evolved since the third century BC. These ancient irrigation systems still function as a crucial element in supplying water for agriculture in the dry zone of Sri Lanka, and they constitute one of the richest sources of wetland biodiversity in the country. It is believed that there are about 30,000 tanks that have been constructed in a land area of about 40,000 KM² of the dry zone.





The integrity and functioning of cascade landscapes in recent years has been degraded significantly with major impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem service provision. A number of drivers and threats have undermined the mixed, heterogeneous landscapes that the cascade system represent. Poor understanding on the function of this complex landscape has led to ignorance and inadvertent destruction of the ancient VTCS during recent large-scale development projects, and as a result of the spread of commercial opportunities and changes in agricultural technologies in the dry zone. Degradation of floral and faunal communities, loss of fertile lands, destruction of village ecosystems and increased severity of droughts are among the most distinct features that have affected cascade landscapes of Sri Lanka. One of the most heavily affected elements has been the areas of traditional knowledge on the conservation and sustainable utilization of biodiversity, especially agrobiodiversity, which has seen the rapid erosion and loss of many traditional varieties. Recent climate change scenarios have further fueled the situation with extreme events seriously challenging the system.

Among the many ecological and environmental challenges faced by Sri Lanka today, none are more critical than the deterioration and degradation of cascade wetland landscapes in the dry zone of the country and the decline in the globally important biodiversity and multiple ecosystem services and co-benefits these landscapes provide.

This Healthy Landscapes project will seek to showcase management strategies for strengthening the restoration and sustainable management of selected VTCSs in cascade landscapes for the enhanced provision of ecosystem services and protection of biodiversity. The project plans to develop and validate a model

VTCS management system that can be used for scaling up to other cascade landscapes in the country.

The project will deliver global environmental and socio-economic benefits through a package of measures – practices, policies, knowledge management and awareness – that ensure future land use and production sector practices and decisions do not compromise biodiversity and ecosystem functions and recognize the importance of biodiversity, agriculture and health linkages. Measures will include scaling up methods and tools to mobilize agro-biodiversity at the cascade, farm and community level, knowledge management partnerships, capacity building, cross sectoral policies and planning and enhanced awareness and understanding of biodiversity, agriculture and health linkages so as to better manage future risks and safeguard ecosystem functioning while ensuring that social costs, including health impacts, associated with new measures and strategies do not outweigh potential benefits.

SACEP is participating in this project as a key implementing partner with two objectives:

- Gain experience in implementing GEF project so that SACEP will be able to manage its own GEF funded projects in future,
- To make use of the huge potential for replication of the findings of this project in rest of our member countries.

The inception meeting of the Healthy Landscapes project was held on 20th September 2019 at Peradeniya, Sri Lanka where number of stakeholders including Ministry of Mahaweli Development & Environment, Government of Sri Lanka, other government agencies, NGOs, CBOs, SACEP, UNEP and Biodiversity International took part in it.

Waste Management

Since 2005, as recommended by the 9th Meeting of the Governing Council (GC) of SACEP, Waste Management has been one of the priority areas of SACEP's work plan and the secretariat has been carrying out various activities during the period.

Since 2018, SACEP together with the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies Collaborating with UNEP on Environmental Technologies (IGES-CCET) is interacting with the governments of South Asian countries towards the development of a Report on the current state of waste management in the South Asian Region, as well as a Sub-Regional Roadmap which would communicate the regional voice, enhance regional cooperation and guide the implementation towards above goals, building on the preceding discussions and the priority action areas identified by UNEP's Global Waste Management Outlook (GWMO) and Hanoi 3R Declaration.

Programme activates under the above collaboration

First Sub-Regional workshop on Preparation of status Report and sub-regional Roadmap for Implementing the Global Waste Management Goals toward Addressing SDGs in South Asia, 25–26 March 2019 in Kathmandu, Nepal

As a part of sub-regional co-operation activities, SACEP in collaboration with CCET, Government of Nepal, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), the United Nations Environmental Programme (UN Environment) – International Environmental Technology Centre (IETC) and the Ministry of Environment, Japan (MOEJ) organized a policy dialogue on implementing the Global Waste Management Goals towards Addressing SDGs and Paris Agreement in South Asia.



The event aimed to:

- Share proposed plans and build consensus among member countries towards development of the Status Report on waste management in South Asia and a Sub-Regional Roadmap as an implementing and monitoring mechanism for delivering on global waste management goals and related SDGs as well as NDCs in the sub-region.
- Review of current status of SWM in the member countries and build consensus on baseline data as the basis for the Status Report. Secure support for acquiring additional data if necessary, for baseline analysis.
- Discuss the global waste management goals and 3R targets, identify priority areas, set measurable targets, and develop appropriate actions and interventions for the sub-regional roadmap.
- These discussions will further feed into the follow-up dialogues in future to elaborate potential financing options, technical innovations, partnership modalities and requisite monitoring and reporting mechanisms for its continued work in South Asia.

Second Sub-Regional workshop on Preparation of status Report and sub-regional Roadmap for Implementing the Global Waste Management Goals toward Addressing SDGs in South Asia, 15-17 July 2019, Dhaka, Bangladesh

As a follow-up of the first workshop, a draft Status Report and the outline of the sub-regional roadmap was developed and SACEP in collaboration with CCET, Government of Bangladesh, the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) – International Environmental Technology Centre (IETC) and the Ministry of Environment, Japan (MOEJ) conducted the Second sub-regional workshop in Dhaka, Bangladesh with an aims to discuss more details on selected thematic subject areas that were identified at the first workshop and identify some practical proposals to consider in improving the situation in the sub-region by 2030.



Third Sub regional Workshop on Preparation of Status Report and Sub-regional Roadmap for Implementing the Global Waste Management Goals towards addressing SDGs in South Asia in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 16-17 September 2019

The objective of the Third workshop was to discuss and finalize the proposed 'Roadmap' and Status Report. SACEP in collaboration with COET, Government of Sri Lanka, the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) – International Environmental Technology Centre (IETC) and the Ministry of Environment, Japan (MOEJ) conducted the Third Sub Regional workshop from 16 – 17 September 2019. The outcome of the Workshop were the Status of Waste Management in South Asia and the Draft Roadmap for Sustainable Waste Management and resource circulation in South Asia which will be implemented nationally subject to adoption at the 15th GC SACEP



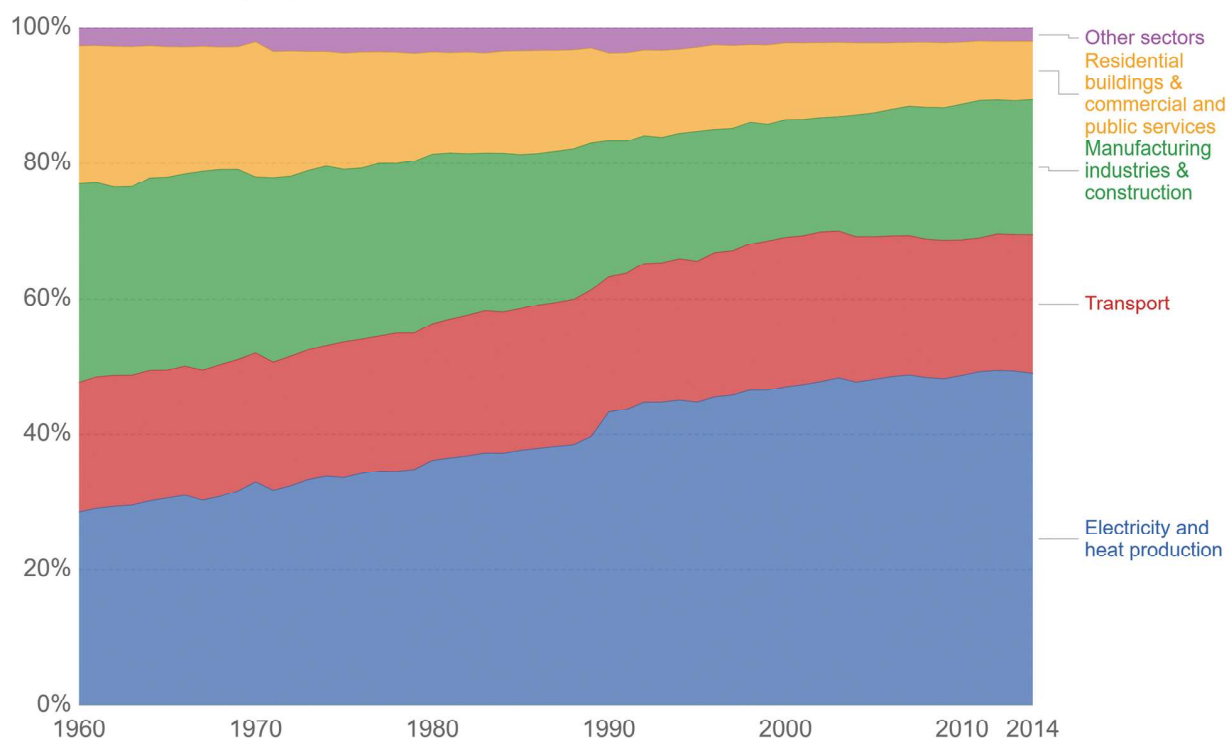
Adaptation to Climate Change

Since 2005, as recommended by the 9GC, SACEP adaptation to Climate Change has been one of the priority areas of SACEP's work plan and the secretariat has been carrying out various activities during the period. South Asian countries are also actively participating in the annual meetings of the UNFCCC and other global fora for promoting cooperation to address the multifaceted challenges of climate change. The Member States have prepared climate change policies, strategies and plans of action and integrated climate change imperatives in their socio-economic planning and decision-making and also have established institutions to address climate change-related issues.

At present all the Eight Member States of SACEP have completed their national ratification procedures and have submitted their first Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) communicating specific measures to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and adapt to climate change and are now preparing for their implementation in 2021.

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by sector or source, World

Share of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from fuel combustion by sector or source.



Source: International Energy Agency (IEA) via The World Bank

OurWorldInData.org/co2-and-other-greenhouse-gas-emissions • CC BY

Regional Workshop on Advancing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) In South Asia, Bangkok, Thailand, from 26 - 27 September 2019

In this regard, SACEP, with the assistance from ADB, organized a workshop to analyze and support the implementation of the NDCs in SACEP Members Countries namely; Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. SACEP carried out a structured survey to shed light on the status of NDC implementation, with a view to support them towards enhancing preparedness and implementation of the various activities specified in their NDCs.

The objectives of the workshop were to understand the current challenges faced by SACEP member countries for NDC implementation and to explore possible modalities of support, and opportunities for collaboration, at national and regional levels. Country NDC Focal Points were requested to fill out a questionnaire to help assess the current status of NDC activities and to identify outstanding challenges and opportunities for progress. Responses were processed and helped to guide workshop design and discussions. SACEP is in contact with ADB, UN Environment, UNFCCC Secretariat to get technical and financial support for its member countries for implementation of NDCs.



Nitrogen Management

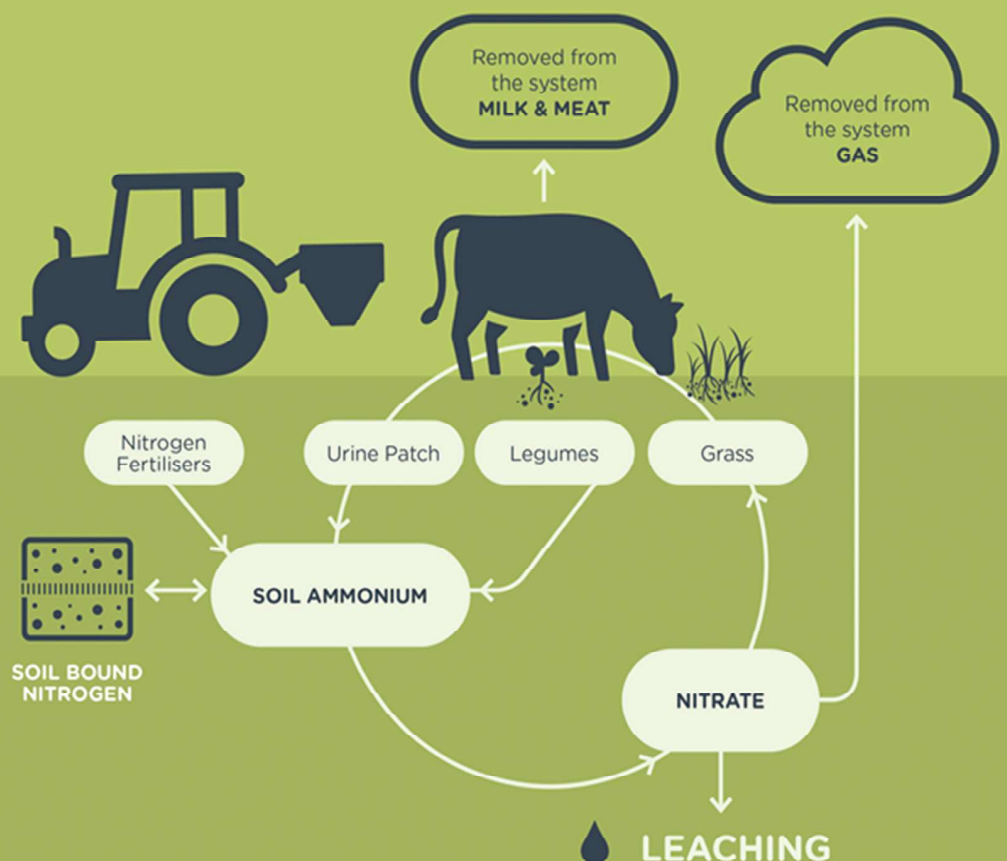
SACEP activities related to nitrogen management goes back to a Regional meeting organized by UNEP-GPA under the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem Project (BoBLME) in June 2012, in Phuket, Thailand to share experiences in addressing Land-based sources of Marine Pollution and facilitate development of a Regional Strategic Action Plan for the countries along the Bay of Bengal. At that meeting SACEP/ South Asia Seas Programme was requested to develop and submit a project proposal to BoBLME to address the mitigating nutrient loading to the marine environment.

In this regard SACEP developed a project concept with the inputs from UNEP-GPNM. The main objective of the project was to reduce and control of nutrient loading into the coastal waters of the

South Asian Seas Region through development of a Regional Action Plan and Policy Forum/Framework.

SACEP signed a LoA with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in April 2013 to implement the above project. Although Pakistan is not part of the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem, Pakistan also jointed the activity with financial support of the SACEP Secretariat.

As a further follow up, SACEP worked with UNEP-GEF on a global project titled 'Targeted Research on the Global Nitrogen Cycle, towards the establishment of an International Nitrogen Management System (Towards INMS)' and SACEP acts as the South Asian collaborating partner in this forum.

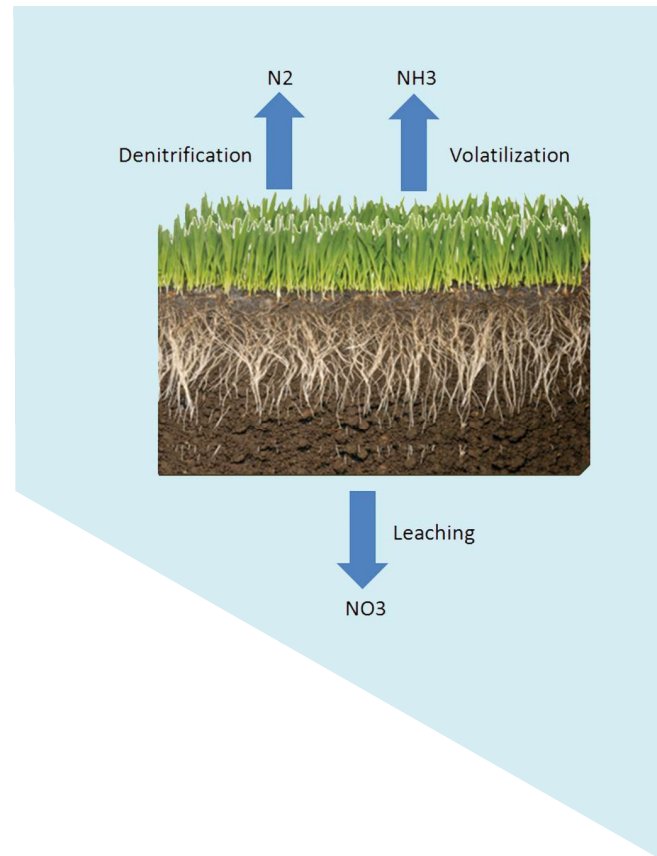


UNEA Resolution on Sustainable Nitrogen Management

SACEP in collaboration with INMS organized a meeting in Maldives on Nitrogen Management from 12-14 September, 2017 in the South Asian Seas Region. The report was finalized and a Draft Resolution on Nitrogen was developed for submission to the United Nations Environment Assembly.

The Resolution was shared with Member States and Government of India took the lead role and submitted the re-drafted Nitrogen Resolution to the UNEP secretariat for its registration and placement before UNEA-4

The Resolution on Sustainable Nitrogen Management was adopted by UNEA-4 while giving recognition to SACEP for initiating the process in March 2019.



South Asia Nitrogen Hub

SACEP and INMS efforts in addressing nutrient pollution in South Asia Region resulted in establishing South Asia Nitrogen Hub. The Hub is funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) under its Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF). This is an international research programme which will contribute to protection from marine pollution, air pollution and climate change from land-based sources in South Asia, with a view to develop policy framework for the nitrogen management in the South Asian Region.

Under the South Asian Nitrogen Hub (SANH), around 50 organizations from across the UK and South Asia have been connected together to help tackle the problem of nitrogen pollution and overcome the challenges it poses to the environment, food security, human health and economic stability in South Asia. Over the next five years, the hub will be funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) under its Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) as well as from the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) and a number of other UK and international partners.

Over the next five years, South Asian Nitrogen Hub will study the impacts of the different forms of pollution to form a coherent picture of the nitrogen cycle. In particular, it will look at nitrogen in agriculture in eight countries namely – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The final outcome would be the South Asia Framework Policy on Nitrogen Management.



South Asian Nitrogen Hub Inception Meeting on 25 – 27 February, 2019, Kathmandu, Nepal

The Inception Meeting of the South Asia Nitrogen Hub was held in Kathmandu, Nepal from 25 to 27 February, 2019. The three day meeting was organized in partnership with SACEP. Government representatives from all SACEP member countries participated with the invitation of SACEP and many other partners of the project also took part in this Inception Meeting. Participants were able to discuss in detail the modalities and time frame in implementing each research programme. There were over 140 participants representing Governments, Universities, Research Institutions both from South Asia and UK.



Role of Eutrophication in Exacerbating, 2 - 5 September 2019, Maldives

The specific Work Programme Meeting of the South Asian Nitrogen Hub was held in Malé Maldives from 2 - 5 September 2019. The meeting hosted by the National University of Maldives was attended by Government representatives from Maldives, India and Sri Lanka with the invitation of SACEP and many other partners of the project also took part in this workshop. Around 45 participants attended this Special Work Package workshop. The participants were able to discuss the opportunities, challenges and initial recommendation for research on the following areas:

- Coral monitoring and experimentation: assessing changes in coral cover, abundance and health in space and time, and their relationships to external stressors including;
- Water quality monitoring and tracing of nitrogen pollution and around reefs and associated systems
- Societal opportunity and challenges: ecosystem services and social approach to understand opportunities for change.

Workshop on Regional Nitrogen Modelling (GCRF SANH), 11 - 13 September 2019, Chennai, India

The Modelling Workshop was held in Chennai, India and hosted by the National Center for Sustainable Coastal Management, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India under the SANH.

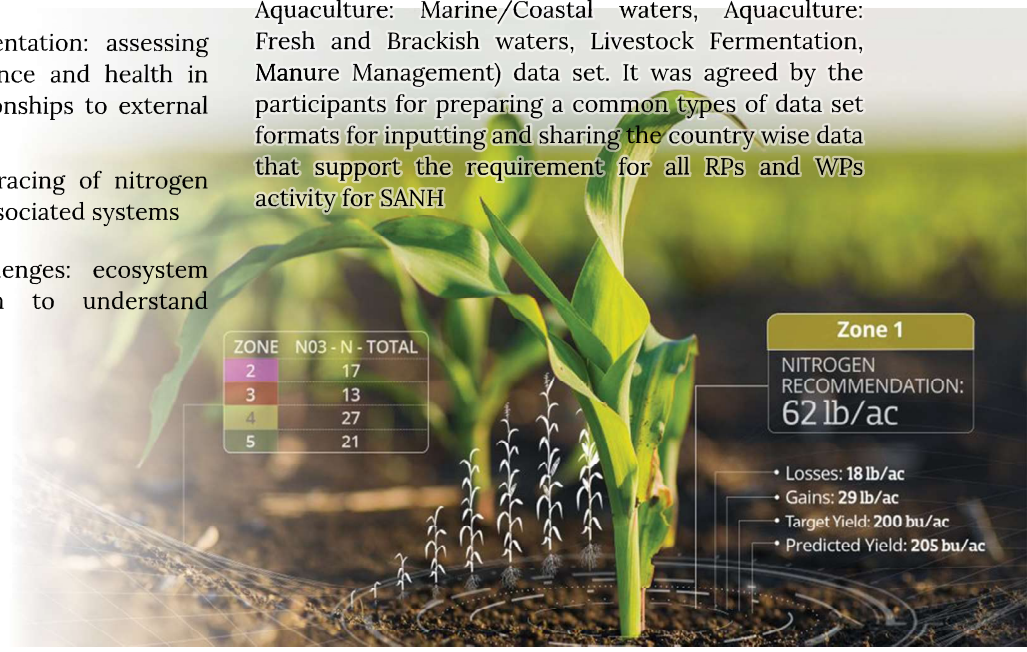
The participants were from field specific experts and from the SANH Research Programme. Around 45 participants attended the workshop to discuss the Terrestrial/freshwater on modelling in South Asia under the following areas:

- WP4.1, Harmonization of data and integration of nitrogen flows;
- WP4.2 Atmospheric modelling workplan;
- WP4.3 Terrestrial, freshwater, ocean modelling workplan; and
- WP4.4 Soils modelling workplan.

The workshop also aimed to develop country and region-specific N scenarios for South Asia which draw on and feed into global N scenarios from INMS activity and will be consistent with N narratives in SSP framework and agreed that the scenarios will be developed with high, medium and low policy ambition which will integrate different SSPs and aim to achieve targeted radiative forcing RCP2.6, RCP4.5 and RCP6.0 Wm^{-2} .

South Asia Regional Demonstration Workshop in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

The workshop was hosted by the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University, Government of Bangladesh under the INMS and INI activities. SACEP member countries participated in the workshop. The demonstration workshop was about the template for preparing the database to develop the inventory for different forms of reactive nitrogen to facilitate improved understanding of global nitrogen cycle by segregating the wastage (Solid waste treatment, Domestic waste water, Industrial waste water) and agricultural (Production and Consumption of fertilizers, Major Food grains, Oilseeds, Horticulture crops, Aquaculture: Marine/Coastal waters, Aquaculture: Fresh and Brackish waters, Livestock Fermentation, Manure Management) data set. It was agreed by the participants for preparing a common types of data set formats for inputting and sharing the country wise data that support the requirement for all RPs and WPs activity for SANH



Marine Environment

Reducing threats to Coral Reefs from Land-based Pollution in Sri Lanka and the South Asia region

Coral reefs are among the most diverse natural ecosystem on Earth. Despite covering less than 1% of the ocean, they account for a quarter of all species. They provide many services in the form of coastal protection, food security, recreation and livelihoods.

Coral reefs in South Asian Seas (SAS) region are particularly vulnerable to land-based pollution, which not only threatens the health of ecosystems and the biodiversity contained therein, but also the health and wellbeing of hundreds of millions of people who depend on ocean habitats services for nutrition, livelihoods and a safe living environment. Increasing sediment and nutrient loads have been linked to decline in the ocean habitats around the world. Release of excess nutrients into coastal waters causes eutrophication, resulting in macroalgae proliferation, algal blooms and the creation of hypoxic 'dead zones', which can kill large numbers of organisms.

In order to best demonstrate the tangible cause-effect linkages between land-based activities, pollution and the impacts on coastal ecosystems, SACEP in collaboration with UNEP decided to implement a pilot study project, which consisted of national pilot study and a regional dialogue.

First, a pilot study was conducted at the national level with the support and co-ordination of the National Focal Point of Sri Lanka as the candidate country. The

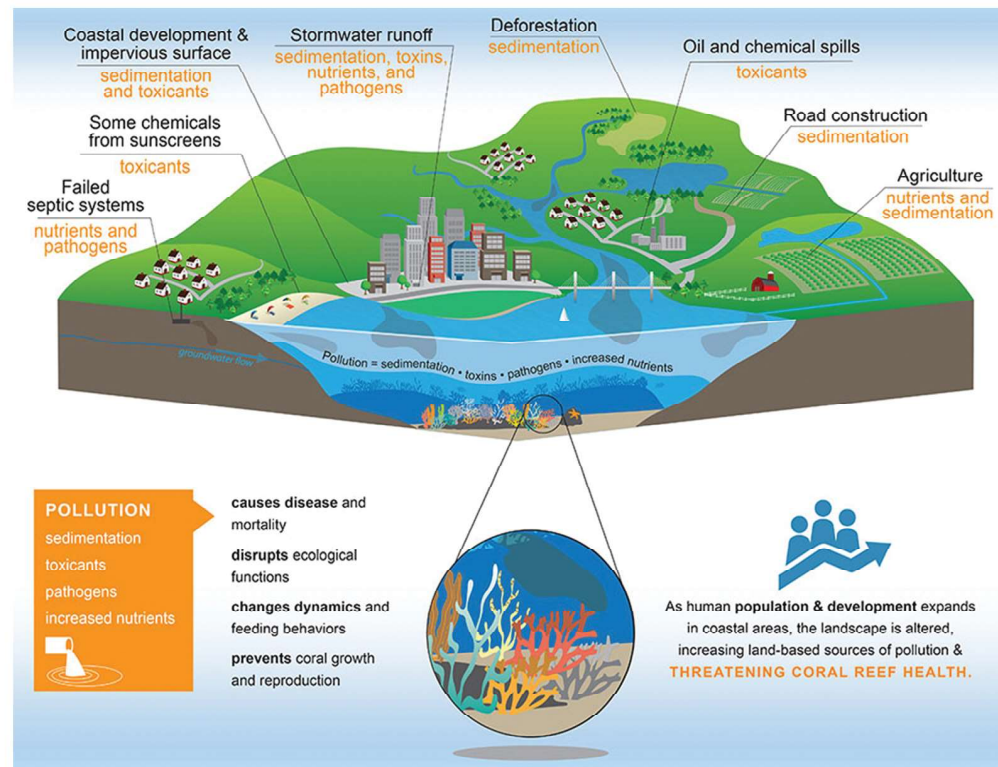


Image Source: www.oceanservice.noaa.gov

target area for the project was the watershed and adjacent coastal area along the Kalkudah Bay in Batticaloa District along the central segment the Sri Lankan coast, i.e. the Maduru Oya watershed. The information gathered from the desk reviews observed that significant synchronization exists between land use patterns and coastal ecosystem. Along with this analyses, best management practices on land management were also documented. The study identified that reef communities at particular locations in the country have demonstrated resilience to recent bleaching events, signaling possibly a higher chance of being less impacted by climate change in the coming decades. This made a good case for their protection from anthropogenic

stressors where these reefs may be used in the future for restorative work in other locations.

As the Second Phase the Regional Stakeholder Meeting addressing on Sustainable Nutrient Management to reduce soil, water and coastal pollution in South Asian Seas region was held from 1-2 April 2019 in Colombo, Sri Lanka to demonstrate the outcomes of the Desk Reviewed Pilot Study. It was understood by the attendees and experts that the pilot project could make a significant contribution for the achievement of SDG 2030 targets and planned to upscale the work regionally – potentially in both the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea.

Ratification of the 1996 Protocol to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and other Matters, 1972 (London Protocol)

The London Protocol (LP) provides comprehensive framework for embracing the precautionary principle and prohibiting all dumping of wastes and other matter, except for those on a prescribed list, which may be assessed and given permits for dumping. A monitoring mechanism is also included for further measures. As the LP supports other such agreements and declarations and is in line with the mandate of SASP, it needs to be ratified by SAS region member states for combating the human generated pollutions discharging to coast and marine environment of SAS region. South Asian Seas (SAS) region would benefit from this in protecting marine environment from land-based sources of pollution.

Regional Workshop on the Promotion of the LP in the South Asia region

SACEP with the technical and financial support of IMO organized the First Regional



Workshop on Promotion of the LP in the South Asian Seas (SAS) Region, hosted by the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of Bangladesh from 10 – 12 July 2019 in Dhaka, Bangladesh to sensitize relevant authorities to the benefits and implications of ratifying, implementing and enforcing the LP. The participants of SAS member countries understood the importance of ratification of the London Protocol.

National Workshop on the Promotion of the LP in Bangladesh

A National Workshop was also organized for Government Officials on 12th July 2019 back to back with the Regional Workshop aiming to produce a draft National Action Plan for London Protocol ratification and implementation in Bangladesh and highlighted the future cooperation when protecting the marine environment in the region, thus maximizing the benefits that can be derived from full implementation of this instrument.



National Marine Litter Action Plan

After adoption of the Regional Marine Litter Action Plan, SACEP is working with individual member countries for developing their national marine litter action plans. Presently, SACEP is coordinating with UN Environment to assist Government of India for the development of Indian National Marine Litter Action Plan, which will be followed by other SASP member countries.



TOWARDS LITTER FREE INDIAN OCEAN

Ballast Water Management

South Asian Seas region lies within one of the busiest shipping lanes globally as it falls within the oil conveyor belt from the Gulf to East Asia. Therefore, ballast water can pose serious economical and ecological damage through introduction of invasive alien species to our coastal and marine waters. The International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM Convention) contains measures to prevent the potentially devastating effects of the spread of harmful aquatic organisms carried by ships' ballast water. It requires all ships in international traffic to implement a Ballast Water and Sediments Management Plan, to carry a Ballast Water Record Book, and an International Ballast Water Management Certificate. All ships will have to undertake Ballast Water Management procedures to a given

standard. Existing ships will be required to do the same, but after a phase-in period. The BWM Convention was adopted on 13 February 2004 and entered into force on 8 September 2017. Presently out of five maritime countries of South Asia, only Maldives is signatory to the BWM Convention.

In this connection, SACEP in collaboration with IMO organized a Regional Workshop on the BWM Convention: Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement (CME), Risk Assessment and Port Biological Baseline Surveys (PBBS) in Malé, Maldives, from 18 - 20 June 2019 to assist the Administrations of the South Asia region in preparing for ratification and implementation of the BWM Convention, with a special emphasis on compliance monitoring and enforcement (CME) as well as port biological baseline

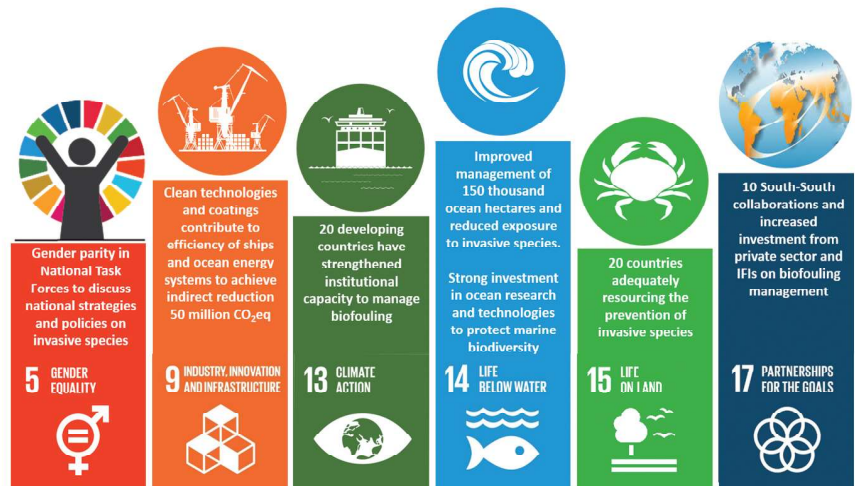
surveys (PBBS) and risk assessments. Based on the feedback received from the SAS Member States the CME, Risk Assessment and PBBS were issues that most of the States were in need of detailed information. Accordingly, the workshop provided guidance for authorities involved in flag and port State control surveys and inspections carried out under the provisions of the BWM Convention. The workshop also provided the theory and practical training on how to plan and conduct PBBS for introduced marine species using standardized protocols, and how to conduct a risk assessment for the implementation of the BWM Convention with a focus on ship targeting for port State control and exemptions under regulation A-4 and the Guidelines for risk assessment under regulation A-4 of the BWM Convention (G7). SACEP is in contact with IMO for further activities in SAS region.



Glo-Fouling Project

SACEP has joined the Glo-Fouling Project of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) as a Regional Coordinating Organization (RCO) since 2018 to address this very critical transboundary marine environmental issue at the regional level and to make a positive contribution to the global effort to protect the marine environment.

SACEP participated at the IMO-Glo-Fouling Project activities with the following specific goals:



International Coastal Clean-up day

Since 2006, SACEP has been involved in organizing events to commemorate the Coastal Cleanup Day which is held in the third week of September each year in the SAS Member States.



Plastic Free Rivers and Seas for South Asia

SACEP and World Bank are collaborating to formulate and implement a US\$ 40 Million regional project on 'Plastic free Rivers and Seas for South Asia'

The menace of plastic waste that pollutes land, flows into river systems and, ultimately into oceans, poses national, regional, and global threats to development. The qualities that make plastic useful—lightness, durability, strength, versatility and low production costs—have resulted in fast growing demand, but mismanaged plastic waste has also created a mounting global ocean pollution crisis.

The global production of plastic is currently estimated to be around 300 million tons per year, while plastic pollution in the marine environment alone (including beaches)

estimated at 9.5 million tons with 1.5 million tons ending up in the ocean annually. The impact of marine plastic pollution has far-reaching economic, ecological and health impacts. The annual global damage of plastics to marine ecosystems is estimated at US\$13 billion per year.



As a result, marine plastic waste has been acknowledged as one of the main global environmental challenges in recent years and the movement to combat marine plastic litter has accelerated in 2019.

The South Asia Region is the third largest contributor to plastic waste globally with an estimated doubling by 2050 unless action is taken. The Maldives aside, all South Asia's coastal nations are among the top twenty most polluting nations ranked by the volume of mismanaged plastic waste. Modelled estimates of floating micro-plastic (<4.75 mm) and macro-plastic (>4.75 mm) abundance (items per square kilometer) suggest that the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem, the ocean system that touches South Asian ocean-facing nations, is in a category of ocean regions with the highest plastic concentration. Plastic waste "leakage" from high mountain states in the upper river watersheds travel and contribute to the accumulation downstream. Following current trends, the amount of mismanaged waste (including plastic) across South Asia is projected to rise from 334 million tons per year in 2016 to 661 million tons by 2050. This will adversely impact the region's ocean ecosystems and sustainable development more broadly.

While several South Asian nations have taken pioneering steps to address parts of the plastic pollution problem, they are often unrecognized, left unshared and not replicated. Moreover, the rivers that carry plastic waste and the regional seas polluted by tons of thousands of pieces of plastic per square mile are themselves transboundary in nature, further amplifying the need for greater understanding of the problem, solutions and the importance of shared responsibility among nations.

The Fifteenth Meeting of the Governing Council of SACEP and the Sixth Inter-governmental Meeting of the Ministers of South Asian Seas Programme held back to back on 6th November 2019 in Dhaka, Bangladesh adopted a number of important documents viz. SACEP Strategy 2020-2030, Sub-regional Roadmap for Implementing the Global Waste Management Goals toward Addressing SDGs in South Asia, Regional Marine Litter Action Plan for South Asia have given high priority for waste management in general and issues related to plastic waste in particular. The Fifteenth Meeting of the Governing Council of

SACEP endorsed the SACEP's collaboration with the World Bank and their development partners to formulate and implement a regional project on Plastic Free Rivers and Seas for South Asia involving SACEP as an implementing agency for the benefit of the South Asian Region.

The project targets a long-term goal of eliminating leakage of plastics into the marine environment across the South Asia Region, which can only be achieved beyond the life of the project. The project seeks to catalyze actions that reduce the flow of plastic pollution into South Asian Seas. This would be accomplished inter alia by supporting competitive block grants, facilitating/supporting public-private sector partnerships and investments in circular economy transitions and refining policies and incentive structures, bottom-up action, education and behavior change. With the political will across South Asian Nations rising, as evidenced through participation and agreements made at the G7, G20, SACEP Governing Council, UN, among others, the time has never been better to mobilize South Asian Nations for collective action to address plastic pollution.



Visiting SACEP Member Countries



January 2019

Director General of SACEP met the Vice President of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan



Dr. Abas Basir met the Vice President of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, H.E. Ustad Sarwar Danish, on Monday, 14th January 2019 at his office. The Vice President was briefed of SACEP's ongoing activities and the support that SACEP could facilitate to its member states.

Director General of SACEP met Chief Executive of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan



Dr. Abas Basir, Director General of SACEP had a fruitful meeting with H.E. Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, Chief Executive of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on 19th January 2019. In this meeting he was briefed of the ongoing activities of SACEP and opportunities for more collaboration was also discussed.

Director General of SACEP met Director General of NEPA, Afghanistan



Dr. Abas Basir, Director General of SACEP met H. E. Mr. Shah Zaman Maiwandi, Director General, National Environmental Protection Agency, Afghanistan, the current Chairman of the Governing Council (GC) of SACEP and briefed the progress of the on-going activities and its way forward. The Chairman of GC-SACEP reaffirmed his commitment as the current Chair for a Green South Asia.

SACEP Delegation met High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Sri Lanka



Director General of SACEP and Head of Chancery, Ms. Jacintha S. Tissera met H.E. Mr. M. Riaz Hamidullah, High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Sri Lanka on 28th January 2019 at the High Commission of Bangladesh in Colombo, where both parties exchanged views of the on-going activities of SACEP and its way forward.

February 2019

SACEP delegation met Minister of Environment & Forest, Nepal



Director General and Senior Programme Officer of SACEP visited Ministry of Environment & Forest, Nepal on 27th February 2019 and had a meeting with Hon' Mr. Shakti Bahadur Basne, Minister of Environment & Forest, Nepal. During the meeting, Director General briefed Hon' Minister on the activities carried out by SACEP and Hon' Minister extended his fullest support for SACEP.

March 2019

Director General of SACEP met Minister, Ministry of Forest and Environment of Nepal



Director General of SACEP Dr. Abas Basir met Honorable Shakti Bahadur Basnet, Minister, Ministry of Forest and Environment of Nepal at his office on 26 March 2019. In this meeting, Dr. Basir thanked Minister and Government of Nepal for hosting two regional meetings in Kathmandu and invited them to participate at the 15th Governing Council meeting of SACEP to be held in October 2019 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Honorable Minister accepted the invitation and appreciated SACEP for its efforts and initiatives.

July 2019

Meeting of SACEP Delegation with Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of Bangladesh



Dr. Abas Basir, Director General of SACEP and its delegation met Mr. Md. Shahab Uddin, Hon' Minister, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Government of Bangladesh, on 14th July 2019 at his office at the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dhaka, Bangladesh. During this meeting at which Mrs. Habibun Nahar, Hon' Deputy Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of Bangladesh and the Senior Dignitaries of the Ministry also attended, Director General of SACEP, briefed the meeting of the ongoing activities of SACEP as well as regarding the 15th Governing Council of SACEP which will be hosted by the Government of Bangladesh in November 2019 back to back with the 6th Inter-governmental Meeting of the Ministers of the South Asian Seas Programme.

Director General of SACEP met Minister of Environment, Government of Maldives



Director General of SACEP Dr. Abas Basir met Dr. Haussain Rasheed Hassan, Minister of Environment, Government of Maldives on 18th July, 2019 at his office, Male, Maldives. Dr. Abas Basir briefed the Minister if the

ongoing activities of SACEP and thanked Government of Maldives for its active roles and engagement in SACEP regional activities. Director General of SACEP invited Minister to attend the 15th Governing Council meeting which will be held in Dhaka, Bangladesh in November 2019.

Minister of Environment, Government of Maldives welcomed Director General of SACEP and expressed his full support of SACEP in conducting the 15GC - SACEP

September 2019

SACEP delegation to the UNCCD met Hon' Minister of Forests and Environment, Nepal.



SACEP delegation to the UNCCD CoP14, Dr. Abas Basir, Director General and Mr. W.K. Rathnadeera, Senior Programme Officer of SACEP called on Hon Minister of Forests and Environment, Government of Nepal on 11th September 2019 at the CoP venue.

Director General of SACEP met with Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India



In sideline with the UNCCD CoP 14, Dr. Abas Basir, Director General of SACEP and Mr. W.K. Rathnadeera, Senior Programme Officer, SACEP had a bi-lateral meeting with Honorable Babul Supriyo, Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change of India on 10th September 2019 at New Delhi, India.

During the meeting, Director General briefly updated Minister of State on the ongoing activities of SACEP and the upcoming Governing Council meeting and the First South Asia Environment Forum. Hon' State Minister appreciated the SACEP work and re-assured India's fullest support to the SACEP. He also assured that the India's pledges to contribute to the construction of building for SACEP Secretariat will meet very soon.



The Delegation of SACEP also had a Meeting with Mr. C.K. Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India where both parties exchanged their views on various subject areas.

November 2019

Director General of SACEP met Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of India



At the side line of the 15th Governing Council Meeting of SACEP (6th November 2019, Dhaka, Bangladesh), SACEP Director General Dr. Abas Basir had a bilateral meeting with Minister Prakesh Javadekar, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of India on 6th November 2019 in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Dr. Basir expressed his gratitude to Government of India for being always supportive to SACEP and the offer of 150000 USD for the SACEP Secretariat Office construction. Dr. Basir also requested Government of India to host the first South Asia Forum on Environment. Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of India appreciated SACEP for its initiatives in terms of promoting regional coordination and being focused on very challenging environmental issues, and ensured continued support of Government of India and his team at the Ministry expressed positive response in hosting the first South Asia Environment Forum.

December 2019

SACEP Bilateral Meetings with Environment Ministers of South Asia - UNFCCC, COP 25, Madrid, Spain

In sideline with the recently concluded United Nations Climate Change Conference, (COP 25) held on 2-13 December 2019, Madrid, Spain, Director General of SACEP, Dr. Abas Basir had bilateral discussions with Director General ,National Environment Protection Agency (NEPA), Afghanistan, H.E. Mr. Shah Zaman Maiwandi, and Deputy Director General Mr. Idris Maliyar; Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of Bangladesh H.E. Mr. MD. Shahab Uddin and his team; Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of Bhutan H.E. Mr. Yeshey Penjor and his team.

During these bilateral meetings, Dr.Basir explained about the activities SACEP had been conducting during the year 2019 and the activities planned for the next year with various collaborative partners including World Bank, ADB, IMO, UNFCCC Secretariat and IGES.

NDC implementation was one of the areas that was discussed during these meetings. Dr. Basir informed the ministers that a gap and need analyses conducted by SACEP in collaboration with ADB shows that South Asian countries are making significant progress in implementing their ambitious NDCs, however still many gaps remain and needs to be addressed. Based on the gap and need analyses, SACEP had a follow up discussion with ADB and UNFCCC Secretariat and is hopeful to get more technical and financial supports in helping member countries to revise and implement their NDCs Dr. Basir added. He also updated ministers on the recent World Bank supported project on 'Plastic free Rivers and Seas for South Asia' and emphasized that successful implementation of this project requires full supports from SACEP member countries.

Ministers congratulated SACEP for its recent achievements and expressed their fullest support for the SACEP proposed projects and activities.

SACEP Bilateral Meetings with Bangladesh 9 December 2019, UNFCCC, COP 25, Madrid, Spain



During the recently concluded United Nations Climate Change Conference,(COP 25) held in Madrid, Spain Dr. Abas Basir met with the High Level Delegation from Government of Bangladesh Including the Honorable Minister of Environment , Mr. Md. Shahab Uddin, Ministry of Forest and Climate Change, Honorable Deputy Minister, Mrs. Habibun Nahar, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Mr. Abdullah Mohsin Chowdhury, Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr. S. M Munzurul Hannan Khan, Additional Secretary (Environment), Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, and Dr. Nurul Quadir, Additional Secretary (Climate Change) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. Dr. Basir first thanked the Government of Bangladesh for their excellent hosting facility provided during the recently concluded Governing Council of SACEP. He further mentioned about the details of the activities carried out by SACEP during the year 2019 and also explained about the future activities which will be carried out by SACEP with various Development Partners in the region during the coming years. Bangladesh representatives congratulated Dr. Basir for all the achievements and agreed to cooperate with SACEP with all its proposed activities in the future.

SACEP Bilateral Meetings with Bhutan on 9th December 2019, UNFCCC, COP 25, Madrid, Spain



Dr. Abas Basir, Director General, South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme, held bilateral discussions with Hon'ble Lyonpo Yeshey Penjor, Minister for the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Kingdom of Bhutan during the recently concluded United Nations Climate Change Conference, (COP 25) held in Madrid, Spain. During the discussions both the parties discussed briefly on the matters related to the next Meeting of the 16th Governing Council of SACEP which will be held in Bhutan, where Bhutan expressed their willingness to host the event in their country. Other programme related matters were also discussed during this meeting where Bhutan expressed their sincere appreciation to SACEP for its past initiatives conducted in the region.

SACEP Bilateral Meetings with Afghanistan
9 December 2019, UNFCCC, COP 25, Madrid, Spain



IDr. Abas Basir, Director General and Ms. Priyankari Alexander, Programme Officer had the opportunity of having a meeting during the UNFCCC CoP 25 with H. E Mr. Shah Zaman Maiwandi, Director General National

Environment Protection Agency (NEPA), Afghanistan, and Mr. Idrees Malyar, Deputy Director General, Policy and International Affairs, National Environment Protection Agency (NEPA), Afghanistan.

During the meeting Dr. Basir mentioned about the future activities of SACEP planned for the next year with various collaborative partners including ADB and UNFCCC on Climate Change and with IGES(CCET) and World Bank on Waste Management. During the discussions Mr. Maiwandi mentioned about the current environmental problems such as Air Pollution and Waste management faced by Afghanistan and requested SACEP to address these issues more prominently.



**WHAT WE ARE DOING TO THE
FORESTS OF THE WORLD IS BUT A
MIRROR REFLECTION OF WHAT
WE ARE DOING TO OURSELVES
AND TO ONE ANOTHER ...**

— Mahatma Gandhi

The 09th Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific ended with acknowledging the role of SACEP, ASEAN and other sub-regional intergovernmental organizations



The 9th Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific themed '3R as a way for moving towards sufficiency economy – Implications for SDGs' took place in Bangkok, the Kingdom of Thailand, on 4-6 March 2019. The Forum discussed the progress towards achieving the goals and targets of Ha Noi 3R Declaration (2013-2023), in addition to gaining policy and scientific insights in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals.

The forum ended with adoption of historic BANGKOK 3R DECLARATION by the mayors and countries of Asia Pacific region. The delegates also reviewed and adopted the Chair's summary which acknowledged the role of SACEP, ASEAN and other sub-regional intergovernmental organizations in further accelerating success of sustainable development of the regions. During the meeting SACEP called for a public-private partnership in the South Asia region and requested private sector to join this initiative.

The First meeting of the GluFouling partnership Project



The environmental impacts of Invasive aquatic species and biofouling were addressed at the 1st meeting of the Global Project Task Force (GPTF-1) of the GEF-UNDP-IMO GloFouling Partnership project at IMO headquarters, London, from 18 to 20 March 2019. The invasive aquatic species and biofouling is a global environmental challenge and causes significant harm to the marine environment and biodiversity loss.

The first meeting of the Project partners aimed to discuss the key governance aspects of the Project, the detailed Project Implementation Plan and, more specifically, the project activities for the 2019- 2020 period. It is a five years project with 48 million USD funds (both GEF grant and partners co-finance). SACEP is one of the leading project partners.

Director General of SACEP Dr. Abas Basir participated at IOCINDO-VII, Hyderabad, India



During this meeting which was held in Hyderabad, India, 31 May-1 June 2019, opportunities for collaboration with Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) and the IOC Regional Committee for the Central Indian Ocean (IOCINDIO) on the issues of mutual interests were discussed.

CITES Cop 18, Geneva Switzerland



The 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES CoP18) started its works on Saturday, 17 August 2019. Speakers at the opening session expressed condolences for the terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka, which had resulted in the CITES CoP18 being moved to Switzerland, and Ms. Ivonne Higuero, CITES Secretary-General, led participants in observing a one-minute silence in honor of the victims of the attacks.



Dr. Alain Berset of Swiss Federal Council and Federal Department of Home Affairs, expressed Switzerland's ongoing commitment as the host country of the CITES Secretariat, as well as to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda. He highlighted Switzerland's proposal, made three days earlier, for stricter domestic measures to address illegal trade in flora and fauna. Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), called for "effective multilateralism" to resolve wildlife challenges, emphasizing the importance of the 10-year strategic vision on the table at CoP18, the value of CITES as a science-based decision-making body, and the need for collective action across processes beyond CITES to address the drivers of biodiversity loss from factors such as over-harvesting of natural resources and poorly planned infrastructure. She urged all concerned to "stay at the table" of multilateralism and drew attention to global events in 2020 on oceans, biodiversity, and implementation of the Paris Agreement on climate.

Asia Pacific Climate Week



The Asia Pacific Climate Week (APCW) high level segment started its work in the United Nations Conference Centre Bangkok, Thailand on 4th September 2019, aimed at raising global ambition and intended to grasp many opportunities of climate action and to stave off the worst impacts of climate change, which are becoming increasingly costly for the region.

Content from the week will contribute to the summit convened by UN Secretary-General António Guterres in New York later this month and COP 25 in Santiago, Chile in December.

The discussions in Bangkok were focusing on five of the summit's nine action tracks: Finance, energy industry, infrastructure, cities and Local Actions, resilience and adaptation, and nature-based solutions.



Annual Global Meeting of the 21st Regional Seas Programme



The Regional Seas Programme have come together in Berlin, discussing the new Regional Seas Strategic Directions as well as the implementation of the 2017-2020 Strategic Directions.

The 21st Annual Global Meeting of the Regional Seas Programme started its work on 3rd October 2019 in Berlin, Germany. This meeting was organized by UN Environment and hosted by the Secretariat of the

Helsinki Convention, and the deliberations were on implementation of the Regional Seas Strategic Directions 2017-2020 and to initiate dialogue for a new strategic directions post 2010; review progress on implementation the voluntary commitments from the 2017 UN Ocean Conference and Regional Seas input to the June 2020 UN Ocean Conference. The meeting also will have inputs to the implementation plan of the New Marine and Coastal Strategy for UNEP 2020-2030.



Director General of SACEP, Dr. Abas Basir addressing the meeting highlighted the importance of this meeting and said that under each goal of the 2017-2020 Strategic Directions, SACEP has conducted many activities which include but not limited to:

- Development of Regional Marine Litter Action Plan and facilitating its implementation at national level;
- Development of Regional Oil and Chemical Pollution Contingency Plan and coordination between the SACEP marine member countries on its implementation;
- Development of Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Strategy;
- Development of South Asia Roadmap on Sustainable Waste management;
- Working on South Asia Framework Policy on Nitrogen Management based on scientific studies that would be conducted by South Asia Nitrogen HUB.
- BOBLME 2nd part
- Healthy Landscape project; a national pilot project which will then be replicated at regional level
- Celebrating International Coastal Clean-up day

SACEP at the UN Convention on Biological Diversity's science body (SBSTTA - 23) which meets to lay groundwork for next year's critical UN Biodiversity Conference



The Twenty Third meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-23), was held from 25-29 November at Montreal, Canada. SBSTTA is one of the CBD's two permanent subsidiary bodies, and recommendations made by the body are suggestions for decisions to be adopted at the biennial meetings of the Conference of the Parties. In this SBSTTA, governments, IGOs, and other partners proposed themes for goals and targets of post-2020 global biodiversity framework, to review new scientific and technical information on biodiversity and climate change, and discussions also were focused on links between nature and culture in the post-2020 biodiversity framework, sustainable wildlife management, technical and scientific cooperation, and ecologically or biologically significant marine areas.

SEA of Solutions Conference 2019



The First Annual Sea of Solutions Conference started its work on November 11, 2019, in Bangkok, Thailand. The week-long event convened by the United Nations Environment Programme and the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) to address plastic pollution. A key message for the event was that "tackling plastic marine litter requires a multi-stakeholder value chain approach to prevent land-based plastic pollution at source by reducing single-use plastic and hard to recycle products, ensuring less plastic is wasted, and increasing reuse and recycling of plastic." The event was attended by hundreds of stakeholders from around the world and it is set to take place annually.

The South Asia Roadmap for Sustainable Waste Management and Resource Circulation was launched at the 9th International Conference on Sustainable Waste Management towards Circular Economy



The 9th International Conference on Sustainable Waste Management towards Circular Economy, was held on 27-30 November 2019, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India to promote the activities that are taking place worldwide in waste management and circular Economy. The Conference brought together representatives from governments, international organizations, academia, research institutions and industries to share knowledge and best practices on waste management and circular economy. The Conference was organized by Kaliga Institute of Industrial Technology, and International Society of Waste Management, Air and Water. SACEP was one of the partner organizations and was represented by Director General Dr. Abas Basir.

A Roadmap for Sustainable Waste Management and Resource Circulation in South Asia, was launched at the Conference and discussed. The Roadmap was formally adopted at the 15th SACEP Governing Council held on 6th November 2019, in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The Conference also addressed the status of waste management in South Asia and different solutions were discussed.

The Icon Sustainable Waste Management for Circular Economy is a platform which recognizes excellent work of ULBs, villages and individuals every year. Mawlynnong village (a village in the East Khasi Hills district of the Meghalaya state in North East India) received the 9th ICON Award for being clean, home composting and sustainable waste management

SACEP Bilateral Meeting with Asian Development Bank and United Nations Frame Work Convention on Climate Change Secretariat 09th/ 10th December 2019, UNFCCC, COP 25, Madrid, Spain



Dr. Abas Basir, Director General, South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme, (SACEP) held bilateral discussions with representative of Asian Development Bank (ADB) during the United Nations Climate Change Conference, (COP 25) held in Madrid, Spain. The discussions mainly focused on how to proceed forward assisting the SACEP member countries in South Asia on their NDC implementation focusing on the outputs/results/ gaps identified during the recently concluded NDC Implementation Regional Workshop in Bangkok, September 2019. During the discussions ADB delegation announced their interest to further collaborate with SACEP on areas such as establishing Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) Systems in South Asia.

On the side line of the conference SACEP also had the opportunity to have discussions with United Nations Frame Work Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat where Dr. Abas Basir met with Mr. Donald Cooper, Director, Mitigation and Analysis, UNFCCC, Mr. Jigme ,Team Leader, Mitigation and Transparency Support, Mitigation, Data and Analysis, UNFCCC and Mr. Bernd Hackmann, Programme Officer, Mitigation, Data and Analysis Programme UNFCCC. During the discussions UNFCCC secretariat happily welcomed the partnership of SACEP and agreed to collaborate with SACEP on implementing activities related to Paris Agreement in SACEP member countries in South Asia. Special emphasis was given on activities related to 'Revision of NDC's in SACEP member countries.



SACEP called for more support to enhance climate actions



Director General of SACEP Dr. Abas Basir addressing COP 25 High Level Segment, UNFCCC COP 25, Madrid, stated that the South Asia region is facing daunting climate-related challenges, causing huge economic, social, and environmental damage to South Asian countries, compromising their growth potential and poverty reduction efforts.

He added that according to the Global Climate Risk Index 2019, among the countries most affected in 2017, Sri Lanka was placed in the second place and Nepal was ranked the world's fourth, while Bangladesh was ranked ninth.

Dr. Basir said: All South Asian countries are party to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Implementation of the agreement is largely anchored in the Nationally Determined Contributions which provide an overarching national framework and political mandate for climate action. He added that South Asian countries making significant progress in implementing their ambitious NDCs. However, full implementation of the NDCs and the development of integrated, comprehensive, long-term, low-emission development plans and strategies requires further bold and innovative steps from the countries as well as from the developed country partners to assist the South Asian countries in implementing their NDCs.



Director General of SACEP, therefore called for improved access to climate fund and enhanced international support for capacity-building. He emphasized on the need for increased financial as well as technical support for adaptation via the ongoing and highly concentration on mitigation finance and expressed SACEP's commitment to continue to work with its member countries to meet their needs through capacity development, exchange of best practices/lessons learned and leveraging including private-sector engagement, in the context of NDC implementation.

34th ICRI General Meeting in Townsville, Australia from 2 - 7 December 2019



The 34th International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) General Meeting started its work on 2nd December 2019 in Townsville, Australia. Dr Sivaji Patra, Senior Programme Officer represented SACEP at this meeting. The objective of the workshop was to:

- Build an understanding of what “managing for resilience” means for coral reefs
- Share leading practice examples of how resilience-based management can be applied
- Resilience-based management tool for reef conservation and the tools available for coral reef managers.

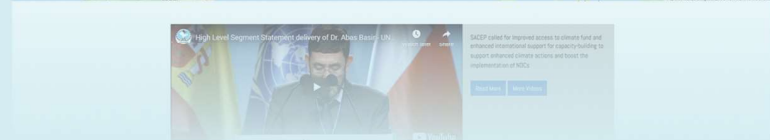
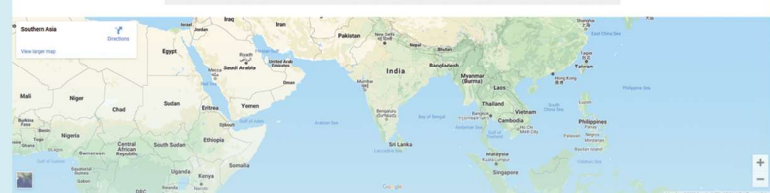
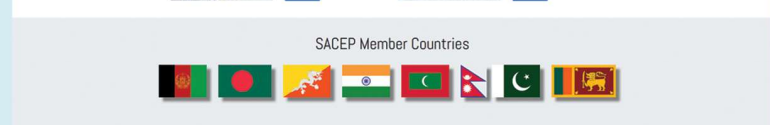
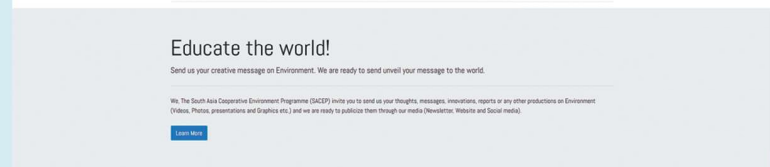
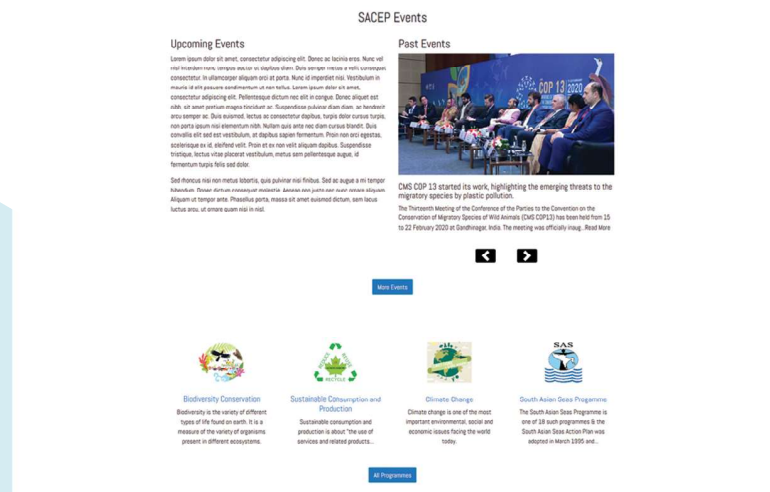
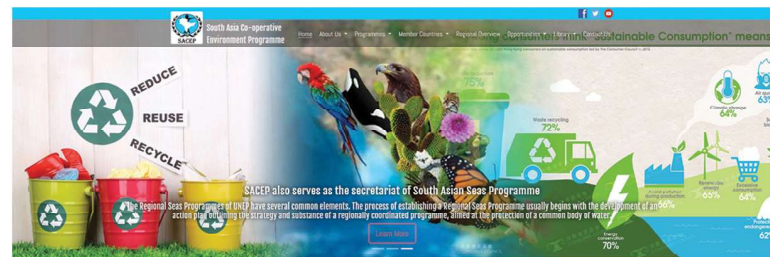
Coral reefs supply a wide range of important benefits to communities around the world. Reefs provide jobs, livelihoods, food, shelter, and protection for coastal communities and the shorelines along which they live. Unfortunately, reefs today are facing multiple threats from many directions. 2019 was one of the warmest years on record, causing widespread damage to coral reefs. Warmer oceans lead to coral bleaching, which is becoming increasingly frequent around the globe—leaving reefs, fish, and the communities who depend on these resources at great risk.

Public Awareness



SACEP launched new website

The SACEP new website was launched at the 131st Meeting of the Consultative Committee of SACEP held on 06th August 2019 at the Secretariat. The members of 131CC-SACEP welcomed this initiative and emphasized the importance of social media to promote the efforts taken to protect our mother planet.



Educate the World

Send us your creative message on Environment.
We are ready to bring your message to the world.

The natural environment is an incredible wonder that inspires us all. Our very existence depends on it. Forests, rivers, oceans and soil provide us with food, the air we breathe, and water. In short, it is our root seed.

It is our responsibility to educate the world about the value of the natural environment and the consequences of its destruction. We invite you all to join us for this purpose.


We, The South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) invites you to send us your thoughts, messages, innovations, reports or any other productions on Environment (Videos, Photos, presentations and Graphics etc.) and we are ready to publicize them through our media (Newsletter, Website and Social media).


For more details visit:
www.sacep.org/educate-the-world

Educate the World

Environmental
Education and
Public Awareness
Programme

South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme

 146/24A, Havelock Road
Colombo 05, Sri Lanka.

 Tel : +94 11 2596443
Fax: +94 11 2589369

 info@sacep.org
www.sacep.org

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 www.sacep.org/youtube

