

REPORT OF THE
SECOND INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETING OF MINISTERS
OF
SOUTH ASIAN SEAS PROGRAMME



1ST JULY 2002
COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

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SOUTH ASIAN REGIONAL SEAS PROGRAMME

SECOND INTERGOVERNMENTAL MINISTERIAL MEETING

1st JULY 2002

COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

REPORT

INTRODUCTION

1. The Second Intergovernmental Ministerial Meeting South Asian Seas Programme was held on 1st July 2002 in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

ATTENDANCE

2. High level delegates from the member countries of the South Asian Seas Programme (Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) attended the meeting. On special request delegations from Governments of Bhutan & Nepal also attended the meeting as members of SACEP.
3. Representatives from the following UN Agencies and International Organisations also attended the meeting: International Maritime Organization (IMO), International Oceans Institute (IOI), International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC), Norwegian Institute for Water Research (NIVA), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and US Environmental Hub for South Asia, Kathmandu.

The List of Participants is in Annex 1.

INAUGURATION

4. The Second Intergovernmental Ministerial Meeting South Asian Seas Programme was inaugurated by Hon Mr. Mahinda Wijesekera, Minister of Fisheries and Ocean Resources, Government of Sri Lanka. In his Inaugural Address Hon Mr. Mahinda Wijesekera said that "let me highlight the importance of the Memorandum of Understanding that we were planning to sign today. The need for having Regional Oil Contingency Plan was one of the priority projects agreed upon at the initial meeting of the National Focal Points of the South Asian Seas Programme. Signing of the MOU and endorsement of the South Asian Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan is very important to Sri Lanka, as most of the oil tanker traffic passes through the south of Sri Lanka, and any disaster will be of catastrophic consequence to both our country, and to the neighbouring countries in the South Asian Region. We have identified the problem of oil pollution due to ships, offshore units, seaports and oil handling facility as a significant environmental problem. Therefore, recognising the importance of taking prompt and effective action to minimise the damage, and the need for combating oil pollution, it is important that all the member countries should agree to the contents of the MOU, which is before us".

A copy of his Address is in Annex 2.

5. The Welcome Address was given by Mr. Mahboob Elahi, Director General, South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme. In his welcome address he said that South Asian Seas Programme was adopted in 1995 and came into force 1997; about 20 years after the first Regional Seas Programme came into being under UNEP.

Altogether more than 140 countries participate in at least one Regional Sea Convention/Actions Plans, the coastal and marine environment is the only unifying force and as the vehicle to achieve objectives of regional cooperation and the sustainable development.

How far we have been able to make use of South Asian Seas Programme as an opportunity for marine and coastal protection and reaching the goal of sustainable development have kept us engaged for the last three days and in the future as for SACEP reporting to the member states on the progress made and the support that was received from the member governments since its creation and the fulfilment of mutual expectations.

The text of his Address is in Annex 3.

6. The Inaugural Session was also addressed by Dr. Veerle Vandeweerd, Co-ordinator GPA, United Nations Environment Programme and Representative of the Executive Director of UNEP. In her address she said, "I would like to stress that we are now living in a different world than when SACEP and South Asian Seas Programme was initiated. There is thus a need to align the concepts and the mode of operation of the South Asian Seas Programme with the new realities. I would like to highlight three of these realities. First of all, the World Summit on Sustainable Development. With the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the global community has come to a crossroad. No longer it is sufficient to declare good intentions and made their declaration. The world and its people want us to go further. They want us to move us from planning to action. This will be a very big challenge to address at the Summit. Not that we want to renegotiate Agenda 21 but we want to agree on concrete action plan to implement Agenda 21. And that is when we all now, that require innovative thinking, innovative solutions, new partnerships including the private sector. There is huge task ahead of us that the regions should contribute."

The text of her Address is in Annex 4.

7. In his Address as Chairman, 1st Intergovernmental Ministerial Meeting of SAS, HE Mr. Asharf Qureshi, High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, Islamic Republic of Pakistan said that it is true that environmental degradation recognises no boundaries but it is also true that sources of this menace can be easily identified. As members of the global community we have to ask ourselves whether we are fulfilling our commitments and the "common but differentiated responsibility" that we undertook. Regrettably the answer is in the negative. Progress on implementation of those solemn pledges made and responsibilities undertaken has been far from satisfactory.

The text of his Address is in Annex 5.

8. Hon. Mr. Rukman Senanayake, Minister of Environment & Natural Resources, Government of Sri Lanka in his address at the inaugural session stated, "We should treasure our oceanic resources. We are surrounded by the Indian Ocean, and our coastal and marine ecosystem has diverse habitats such as coral reefs, estuaries, mangroves, sea grass beds, and salt marshes. All these habitats are very productive with a rich biodiversity. We cannot protect these marine and coastal resources without regional cooperation. Regional cooperation is very important in dealing with all our common environmental problems not only those associated with the marine resources. We have to protect our seas from human activities in our region, but we need to take measures to prevent the impacts from any such activities in other regions in the world. Indian ocean is one of the active seas in the world. Those activities can have negative impact on our marine resources. Unless we strengthen our regional position, we will not be able to make a voice at the global fora to protect our seas."

The text of his Address is in Annex 6.

9. Dr. Suren Batagoda, Director Global Affairs, Ministry of Environment & Natural Resources, Government of Sri Lanka delivered the Vote of Thanks.

The text of his Address is in Annex 7.

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

10. In accordance with the provisions of Articles of Association of SACEP, Hon Mr. Rukman Senanayake, Minister of Environment & Natural Resources, Government of Sri Lanka was elected Chairman of the 2nd Intergovernmental Ministerial Meeting of the South Asian Seas Programme. Dr. B. R. Subramanian, Advisor, Department of Ocean Development, Government of India was elected as Vice Chairman of the Meeting. HE Mr. Abdul Azeez Yoosuf, High Commissioner of Maldives in Sri Lanka was elected as Rapporteur.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND ORGANISATION OF WORK

11. The Draft Agenda prepared by the Secretariat for this Meeting was then discussed and the adopted Agenda is contained in Annex 8

STATEMENTS BY HEAD OF DELEGATIONS OF MEMBER COUNTRIES

12. The Country Statements from member governments of the South Asian Seas Programme was delivered by the respective Heads of Delegations. The respective country statements are found in Annexes 9 - 13.

STATEMENTS BY UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES, INTERNATIONAL/REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND AID CONSORTIA

13. Under this Agenda Item, the representatives on the International Maritime Organization and the US Environmental Hub in Kathmandu delivered statements. These are found in Annexes 14 & 15.

PRESENTATION OF REPORT OF PREPARATORY MEETING OF NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS FOR 2ND IMM BY RAPPORTEUR

14. The Rapporteur of the Preparatory Meeting of National Focal Points presented the report of its meeting. A copy of this Report is given in Annex 16.

APPROVAL OF PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2002 -2004

15. The meeting considered and approved the Work Programme of-SASP for the period 2002 - 2004 which included unimplemented projects from the 1st IMM. The approved Work Programme is given below.

PROGRAMME OF WORK 2002 - 2004

Integrated Coastal Zone Management

PROJECT TITLE	TIME FRAME	ESTIMATED BUDGET IN US \$
1) Capacity Building for the control of coastal erosion in the context of ICZM in the South Asian Seas Region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Development Meeting • Workshop on Coastal Erosion 	12 Months	40,000 95,000
2) Assessment of Areas Vulnerable to Sea Level Rise in the South Asian Seas Region	18 Months	406,500

National and Regional Oil Spill Contingency Planning

PROJECT TITLE	TIME FRAME	ESTIMATED BUDGET IN US \$
1) Capacity Building in the Development and Operation of National Oil Spill Contingency Planning	12 months	336,775 (3 seminars / Workshops)
2) Capacity Building Activities with IMO	24 Months	200,000

Human Resource Development through Strengthening Regional Centres of Excellence

PROJECT TITLE	TIME FRAME	ESTIMATED BUDGET IN US \$
1) Identification of Capacity Building Requirements in Coastal and Marine Environmental Protection and Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Development • Cost of Course Material and Course expenses for 8 Courses 	12 Months	75,000 600,000
2) Strengthening the Capacity of the Regional Centres of Excellence in the Protection and Management of the Coastal and Marine Environment	6 Months	225,000

Protection of the Marine and Coastal Environment from Land-Based Activities

PROJECT TITLE	TIME FRAME	ESTIMATED BUDGET IN US \$
1) Approval of Draft National Action Plans prepared by National Consultants for implementation of the GPA at a National Forum	6 Months	5,000 per country for 7 countries
2) Regional Workshop to finalise Draft Regional Overview and Action Plan on the Implementation of the GPA and implementation of components of Regional Action Plan	6 Months	30,000
3) Development of National Pilot Programmes of Action for the Protection of Marine Environment from Land-based Activities	18 Months	75,000 per country for 5 countries

4) Setting up of a Clearing House Mechanism for GPA in the South Asian Seas Region with South Asia Environment and Natural Resources Information Centre (SENRIC) functioning as the central node	To be determined	To be determined
5) Participation in GPA Project on Physical Alterations and Destruction of Coastal Habitats: Guidelines for Action and Role of Stake Holders	To be determined	To be determined
6) Assistance for Development of a Proposal for a GEF Block B PDF Grant under the GPA	To be determined	To be determined

WORK PROGRAMME WITH WORLD CONSERVATION MONITORING CENTRE

PROJECT TITLE	TIME FRAME	ESTIMATED BUDGET IN US \$
1) Regionalisation of global datasets: UNEP-WCMC maintains global datasets on marine ecosystems, threatened marine species and threats to marine biodiversity.	To be determined	To be determined
2) Evaluation under World Heritage Convention of tropical coastal ecosystems in World Heritage Sites	To be determined	To be determined
3) Use of internet technology to foster horizontal linkages and facilitate data sharing and information exchange between different SACEP and other Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans;	To be determined	To be determined
4) Capacity building with UNEP-WCMC in training in the areas of its core competencies	To be determined	To be determined

OTHER PROJECTS

PROJECT TITLE	TIME FRAME	ESTIMATED BUDGET IN US \$
1) Development of National Water Quality Criteria for Different Uses of Sea Water with NIVA	24 Months	2,000,000
2) 2 nd Regional Training Course for Management of Protected Areas & Coral Island Ecosystems in the Indian Ocean	2003	50,000
3) Work Programme with Coral Reef Degradation in the Indian Ocean (CORDIO) a) Alternatives Livelihoods for Dependents of Coral Reefs b) Providing Information for Decision Making for Sustainable Use and Management of the Coral Reefs of Sri Lanka	2002 - 2003	20,000
4) Development of Type 2 projects under ICRAN	2 Months	9,000
5) Participation in Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA) Work Programme – Bay of Bengal (Bob) Sub Regional Assessment	To be determined	To be determined
6) Participation Sustainable Management of the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem – FAO - GEF Project	To be determined	To be determined
7) Participation in activities connected with the Indian GOOS Programme	To be determined	To be determined

APPROVAL OF COUNTRY CONTRIBUTIONS & BUDGETARY REQUIREMENTS FOR 2002 -2004

17. The meeting approved the budgetary requirements for the years 2002-2004 and the country contributions for these years as recommended by the Preparatory Meeting of National Focal Points. The agreed country contribution & budgets for 2002 – 2004 is given below. The IMM also accorded flexibility to the Director General of SACEP in incurring the above expenditure with due approval from Consultative Committee.

APPROVED COUNTRY CONTRIBUTIONS FOR SAS TRUST FUND

COUNTRY		2001	2002	2003	2004
		US \$	US \$	US \$	US \$
	%				
Bangladesh	14.5	13,335	13,335	13,335	13,335
India	35.0	32,185	32,185	32,185	32,185
Maldives	6.5	5,975	5,975	5,975	5,975
Pakistan	29.5	27,130	27,130	27,130	27,130
Sri Lanka	14.5	13,335	13,335	13,335	13,335
TOTAL	100	91,960	91,960	91,960	91,960

APPROVED SAS SECRETARIAT BUDGET FOR 2002 TO 2004

	2001	2002	2003	2004
	Cost in US \$			
PERSONNEL				
International				
Programme Co-ordinator	36,000	36,000	36,000	36,000
Local				
1 Junior Programme Officer	3,250	3,250	3,250	3,250
1 Secretary	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
OFFICE INFRASTRUCTURE				
Furniture, Office Equipment & Consumables	13,215	13,215	13,215	13,215
RENTAL AND MAINTENANCE	8,065	8,065	8,065	8,065
ADMINISTRATION COSTS	6,430	6,430	6,430	6,430
MEETING & INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL	12,855	12,855	12,855	12,855
DOCUMENTS	3,210	3,210	3,210	3,210
CONTINGENCIES	6,435	6,435	6,435	6,435
TOTAL	91,960	91,960	91,960	91,960
RECURRENT	78,745	78,745	78,745	78,745
CAPITAL	13,215	13,215	13,215	13,215

The meeting welcomed the information from the representative of IMO that an amount of US \$ 200,000 has been allocated for the South Asian Seas region for the purpose of training under OPRC and MARPOL during the biennium 2002-2004. He also stated that IMO is currently assisting the Governments of Bangladesh and Pakistan to develop their National Contingency Plans.

ADOPTION OF RECOMMENDATIONS PROPOSED BY PREPARATORY MEETING OF NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS

18. The 2nd IMM considered the recommendations put forward by the Preparatory Meeting of National Focal Points. These recommendations were carefully considered and the following recommendations were approved by the 2nd IMM.

Noting that a Review Process of SACEP is ongoing and without precluding the outcome of this Review Process:

- a. The IMM requests the SACEP Secretariat to commence with the recruitment procedures for the Programme Co-ordinator as soon as financial resources are available and requests the Director General of SACEP to make the interim arrangements for SAS co-ordination. The IMM welcomes UNEP's offer to financially support an interim co-ordinator.
- b. Noting the urgent need for a Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan and also that only two member states are in the position to sign the associated Memorandum of Understanding, the IMM urges the other three member states to expedite their acceptance at an early date and requests the SAS Secretariat to make arrangements for signing the MOU immediately after these countries convey their acceptance.
- c. The IMM endorses the programme of SAS as reflected in this Report and calls upon UNEP, GPA Coordination Office, WCMC, IMO, NIVA and other potential partner agencies to continue to assist the Secretariat in securing the resources for the implementation of the programme.
- d. The IMM urges the countries in the region to identify the projects of national relevance under the 4 priority areas of the SAS Action Plan and implement them using the resources available to them.
- e. The IMM noted that most of the countries have not made their agreed annual contributions to the SAS Trust Fund. The IMM urges these countries to expedite the payment of their contributions and arrears. This will facilitate smooth functioning of the Secretariat and the implementation of the programme of work.
- f. The IMM approved the Audited Accounts of the South Asian Seas Programme for the years 1999 & 2000.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

19. Under this Agenda Item, the following 3 proposals submitted by Sri Lanka delegation were considered.
- a) To request the SAS Secretariat & UNEP to explore the possibility of sharing experiences with other relevant Regional Seas Programmes.
 - b) To investigate the establishment of Technical Coordinating committee including line agencies other than National Focal Points.
 - c) To review the term of reference of SACEP's role as the SAS Secretariat in order to build its capacity.

The 2nd IMM requested the SAS Secretariat to study these three issues comprehensively and submit their findings to the National Focal Points and Consultative Committee for possible direction.

ADOPTION OF REPORT & CLOSURE OF MEETING

20. The meeting considered and adopted this Report on 1st July 2002.
21. After adoption of the Report, the Chairman Hon Mr. Rukman Senanayake thanked all delegates for their co-operation in making this meeting a success.

Dr. B. R. Subramanian speaking on behalf of all the delegates thanked the SAS Programme for conducting this meeting in a very professional manner and thanked the Government of Sri Lanka for their very warm hospitality.

**SOUTH ASIAN SEAS PROGRAMME
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Representative of the United Nations Environment Programme,
Director General of South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme,
Distinguished Delegates and Invitees,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me, to address you, at this Second Intergovernmental Meeting of Ministers of the South Asian Seas Programme. First of all, I would like to thank Hon. Rukman Senanayake, the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of Sri Lanka, for giving me this opportunity.

However, I was made to understand that the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on South Asian Regional Oil Spill Contingency Planning had to be postponed due to the requirement of further consideration by 3 member countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Regional Seas Programme is a remarkable initiative taken by the UNEP, and the South Asian Seas Programme of the SACEP has a priority among the SACEP's programmes, that address regional environmental issues in South Asia. Environment has become a very important subject today, as we have been increasingly experiencing various consequences of mismanagement of our own environment. We have experienced increasing threats to our environment and natural resources. These problems have developed to a very complicated state, that have even transboundary effects, so that, it has become difficult for countries, to handle their environmental problems solely by themselves. This is very true, when it comes to marine environment and resources. Therefore nowadays, the importance of having regional and global co-operation is felt more as an urgent need.

In today's meeting, we have representatives from Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Facilitating the implementation of the South Asian Sea Programme and the South Asian regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan is the responsibility of all the SACEP member countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you are aware, the South Asian Seas Programme was convened in 1983, and the Action Plan for the Prevention and management of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the South Asian Seas Programme was adopted in March 1995 in New Delhi. The priority areas in relation to this Action Plan of the South Asian Seas Programme, has been identified. The Integrated Coastal Zone Management Development, and Implementation of National and regional Oil Spill Contingency Planning, Human Resources Development through Strengthening of Regional Centres of Excellence, and Protection of Marine and Coastal Environment from Land-based Activities are some of them.

In Sri Lanka, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources is the National Focal Point for the SACEP, and the South Asian Seas Programme. Actually, the finalisation of the South Asian Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan, and the Memorandum of Understanding that we were supposed to sign today was done in Colombo in December 2000, while I was the then Minister of Environment in Sri Lanka.

Now I am the Minister in charge of the subjects of Fisheries and Ocean Resources. Almost all the major components of the South Asian Seas Programme fall within the purview of my Ministry as the Coast Conservation Department and the Marine Pollution Prevention Authority are under my Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean resources. We are already in the process of strengthening the Marine Pollution Prevention Authority through the Institutional Strengthening of Oil Spill Contingency Management Project funded by the Norwegian Government.

I am glad to mention that not only my Ministry, but the other relevant Ministries such as the Ministry of Ports Development and Shipping, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, are working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources in the Implementation of activities under the South Asian Seas Programme.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let me highlight the importance of the Memorandum of Understanding that we were planning to sign today. The need for having Regional Oil Contingency Plan was one of the priority projects agreed upon at the initial meeting of the National Focal Points of the South Asian Seas Programme. Signing of the MOU and endorsement of the South Asian Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan is very important to Sri Lanka, as most of the oil tanker traffic passes through the south of Sri Lanka, and any disaster will be of catastrophic consequence to both our country, and to the neighbouring countries in the South Asian Region. We have identified the problem of oil pollution due to ships, offshore units, seaports and oil handling facility as a significant environmental problem. Therefore, recognising the importance of taking prompt and effective action to minimise the damage, and the need for combating oil pollution, it is important that all the member countries should agree to the contents of the MOU, which is before us.

I would like to add that our mutual co-operation of this nature will definitely further strengthen our regional bond, and it will facilitate, and give more credit to the activities implemented jointly by the governments of the region, SACEP and UNEP.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I take this opportunity to thank the Ministry of Environment and natural resources of Sri Lanka, the main organiser of this meeting, SACEP and UNEP, and you all, our neighbours in the region, for your contribution towards regional environmental co-operation, and I hope in the future, we will be able to contribute more towards regional co-operation, delivering our maximum contribution towards a better global environment.

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY
MAHBOOB ELAHI
DIRECTOR GENERAL
SOUTH ASIA CO-OPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME**

It was the twilight of 1960 era when more and more nations were surfacing on the map of the world as a result of getting independence from the former colonial masters, the famous French Oceanographer Jacques-Yves Cousteau who earlier held a view that oceans were exploitable resource, for the first time raised an alarm over the deteriorating conditions of the marine environment. It somehow led to a realization what's at stake: fisheries, holiday beaches, treasured coral reefs and species-rich coastal wetlands, and even the health.

The first institutional response in this regard was UN Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in Geneva in 1958 that adopted four Geneva Conventions on defining territorial seas and continental zones, continental shelf, high seas and on fishing and conservation of living resources. These have since been superseded by UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982 to facilitate international communications and promote the peaceful uses of the seas and oceans, the equitable and efficient utilization of their resources, the conservation of their living resources, and the study, protection and preservation of the marine environment to contribute to the realization of a just and equitable international economic order which takes in to account the interests and needs of mankind as a whole and, in particular the special interests and needs of developing countries, whether coastal or land-locked.

While at the same time in the past one hundred years, approximately 40 Regional Fisheries Bodies have been established. The evolution of these bodies corresponds to the three distinct phases of the evolution of international fisheries concerns in the twentieth century: the pre-UNCLOS period 1902-1950, the Law of the Sea negotiating period 1951-1982, and the post-Third UNCLOS period. Most bodies established in the pre-UNCLOS period, such as International Council for the Exploration of the Sea lay emphasis on the gathering of scientific information and the promotion of scientific collaboration. Several bodies established during the Law of the Sea negotiating phase have basically advisory powers but may also have regulatory powers with respect to conservation and management issues, whereas almost all bodies established after the adoption of the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention have clear management functions.

There are presently 30 active marine Fisheries Bodies, seven of which have been established under the FAO Constitution in 1945. Four Regional Fisheries Bodies cover the parts of Indian Ocean Region constituting South Asian Seas. These are Indian Ocean Tuna Commission mostly covering Large Marine Area comprised of Bay of Bengal; Western Indian Ocean Tuna Organisation, mostly comprised of Large Marine Area of Arabian Sea, including EEZ of Sri Lanka; Regional Commission for Fisheries partly covering areas around Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf, and South Western Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission partly covering SAS Region and the eastern coast of Africa. These and other RFBs are currently reviewing and adapting their mandates (other than advisory and regulatory functions) to address emerging issues enumerated in recent international instruments.

As a result, coastal and marine concerns, which were for long treated as purely local and national issues, began to move up the global agenda. The 1972 UN Conference on Human Environment underlined the vital importance of seas and oceans for humanity. The 1992 Rio Conference or the Earth Summit embodied a new concern for sustainable development and Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 was devoted to ocean and coastal areas. Initially, 1992 CBD and UNFCCC put marine activities in new perspective, which were further, strengthened by other/additional MEAs on chemicals and bio-safety etc.

United Nations Environment Programme established as a result of 1972 UN Conference on Human Environment endorsed the regional approach to controlling marine pollution and started its Regional Seas Programme in 1974.

Since then, several Regional Environmental Conventions and Action Plans have been established under UNEP's auspices: Mediterranean (1975, 1976); South East Pacific/Lima Convention (1976); Caribbean (1981,1983); the ROPME Sea Area, Kuwait Region (1979); East Asian Seas (1981,1994); South Pacific (1982); Red Sea and Gulf of Eden/Jeddah Convention (1982,1999); West and Central Africa/Abidjan Convention (1984); Black Sea (1992); North West Pacific (1994) and North West Pacific (2000).

South Asian Seas Programme was adopted in 1995 and came into force 1997; about 20 years after the first Regional Seas Programme came into being under UNEP. Plans for the North East Pacific and South West Atlantic are in development and 3 similar agreements amongst developed countries are in place in Baltic, Arctic and North East Atlantic. Altogether more than 140 countries participate in at least one Regional Sea Convention/Actions Plans, the coastal and marine environment is the only unifying force and as the vehicle to achieve objectives of regional cooperation and the sustainable development.

How far we have been able to make use of SASP an opportunity for marine and coastal protection and reaching the goal of sustainable development have kept us engaged for the last three days and in the future as for SACEP reporting to the member states on the progress made and the support that was received from the member governments since its creation and the fulfilment of mutual expectations.

The 1972 Stockholm Conference also triggered the process of marine and coastal protection. International Maritime Organization has been in existence since 1948 for the regulation of shipping industry, maritime traffic and safety at sea. The result was marine pollution convention - MARPOL 1973/1978 and its Annexes to specifically deal with pollution related to oil, noxious substances in bulk, harmful substances in bulk, harmful substances carried by sea in package form, sewage, garbage, and air pollution from ships. It followed the adoption/ratification of Compensation and Liability and Fund Conventions and Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation Convention in 1990. It is under the latter Convention that SACEP has prepared Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan covering the maritime member states of SACEP with the technical and financial assistance of IMO. A MOU is proposed to be signed by the member countries of SASP to give effect to this instrument of co-operation.

This support of an important organisation like IMO that has close linkages to the marine industry and transport and good rapport with the national governments, in the area of marine protection has indeed outstanding.

Spirit of cooperation was further endorsed by the adoption of Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities as Washington Declaration in 1995. Although it is a non-binding agreement but has provided an additional institutional mechanism for various pollutants which constitute about 70% of the sources of marine pollution. These included sewage, petroleum, hydrocarbons, sediment load, habitat destruction and litter.

It will be noted that the intent and content of all these legal instruments and institutional mechanisms places us to ensure sustainable development of coastal and marine areas. Indeed the relationship between land and sea is not one way but interactive and mutually reinforcing in terms of exchange of food energy and, air circulation, rain fall and weather changes etc.

It will thus be agreed that policies required for effective environmental management has to be process-oriented, holistic in nature and integrative in approach with due focus on equity, benefit sharing, participatory decision-making with due support and commitment both by Governments and public for poverty alleviation, poverty prevention and regional and global international cooperation.

It thus brings us close to the emerging consensus for the WSSD preparatory process wherein the following elements have emerged for priority consideration:

- Poverty eradication
- Changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption (energy, transportation, waste, chemicals)
- Protection and managing of natural resource base of economic and social development (water resources, oceans, disaster management, climate change, agriculture, desertification, mountains, tourism, bio-diversity, forest, mining)
- Sustainable development in a globalising world (sound macro-economic policies, multilateral trading and financial system, trade-related technical assistance and capacity-building programmes, foreign direct investment, corporate responsibility and accountability)
- Health and sustainable development (health and environmental linkages, phase-out of lead in gasoline and assist and providing affordable energy to rural communities)
- Sustainable development of SIDS
- Sustainable development for Africa (declining ODA, market access, energy initiatives and climate change and support to UNCCD)
- Means of implementation (trade and finance, technology transfer, role of scientific community, education, capacity building and information for decision making)
- Sustainable development governance (principal of common but differentiated responsibilities, rule of law, human rights, international finance and trade, partnerships)

The text of Political Declaration is under preparation. The implementation plan, its details and measurable outputs, details of partnerships and relative focus on Type 1 and Type 2 interventions still remains to be the contentious issues and will be resolved during the first half of WSSD at Johannesburg. It is expected that outcome of WSSD brings in new vigour, commitment and resources for protection of our environment at land and sea at the national, regional and global level. SACEP would continue to work with the national, regional and global organisations for the realisation of these objectives. We will expect that member governments of SACEP will continue to provide us their support and guidance in the realisation of the vision of this organisation decided about 20 years ago by the leadership of this region.

**ADDRESS BY
THE REPRESENTATIVE OF UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME,
DR. VEERLE VANDEWEERD,
CO-ORDINATOR, GPA OFFICE, THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS**

Honourable Ministers for the Environment of Sri Lanka and Nepal
Honourable Minister for Fisheries and Ocean Resources of Sri Lanka
Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Distinguished Delegate
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is indeed a great pleasure and honour for UNEP to be here at the second Inter-ministerial Conference for the South Asian Seas Programme. I bring you the best wishes and greeting of the Executive Director of UNEP, and of the Secretary General of United Nations, Dr. Klaus Töpfer. He has asked me to represent him here at this important meeting and I wish to express to you the importance he attached to this region and the importance he also attached to the South Asian Seas Programme. UNEP also wishes to thank Sri Lanka for its warm hospitality and for hosting the meeting. Indeed yesterday together with some of my colleagues, we had the opportunity to see some of the beautiful countryside and I wish to tell you Your Excellency, that we were greatly impressed.

The Executive Director of UNEP has asked me to take over the overall responsibility of the Regional Seas Programmes in close cooperation with my colleague Eirik Adler and it is therefore a personal pleasure to be here. UNEP has been supportive to SACEP and South Asian Seas Programme since its very beginning. Indeed UNEP supported started already in 1982 at request of the 10th session of the Governing Council of UNEP. Between 1983 and 1995, UNEP supported quite a number of consultative meetings, which eventually led to the adoption of South Asia Seas Programme in 1995, after more than 13 years of negotiations and consultations.

The Action Plan rightly puts the focus on 4 major issues:

- Integrated Coastal Zone Management
- Oil Spill Contingency Planning
- Human Resource Development and Capacity Building
- Land Based Sources of Pollution

Since the adoption of the South Asian Seas Action Programme, UNEP has continued to support SAS within its available resources and unluckily since 1995 resources available at UNEP have been declining but this trend is being reversed at the present moment in time. The support ranged from the development of project proposals to the preparation of the Oil Spill Contingency Plan under the leadership of IMO and a set of activities under Global Programme of Action. For those few who do not know, GPA stands for the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of Marine Environment from Land Based Activities, which was adopted in Washington in 1995, & I have now the honour and pleasure to head the UNEP Secretariat for GPA in The Hague, the Netherlands. I always feel that the title should change to OLE - Ocean for Life on Earth.

The implementation of the GPA is in its first phase, as is the implementation of SAS Action programme, the task of the national governments. The UNEP Secretariat in The Hague, as the SAS Secretariat in Colombo is supporting the efforts of the National Governments to protect and preserve the coastal and marine environment.

We, in The Hague have concentrated, in the support on mainly in three areas, which we briefly want to share with you. Because I think they are very relevant to the region and we have concentrated on our efforts in supporting the GPA globally in to the regions, one of the regions is South Asian Seas Programme.

We have selected three major areas as:

- Municipal Waste Water
- Physical Alteration and Destruction of Habitats
- National Programme of Action

For municipal wastewater, we have developed guidelines and conducted a first meeting in the region to review experiences and expertise with alternatives, which we hope will be adopted by the UNEP Governing Council and set a global standards on how to address municipal wastewater in a sustainable manner. We also have the conductivity in the region of first meeting to review the guidelines and even more importantly review the expectations and experience available in the region, which is abundant, but with the alternate experience and sustainable solutions, practices and procedures to address the urgent problem of sewage. In discussions yesterday with some of representative of countries we came to the conclusion that it could be very useful in this region to have at lease once in every two years, major meetings to which we invite local authorities, decision makers in municipal waste water, experts, national governments, the private sector and financial institutions to come together and share the experience in the region on how to treat municipal wastewater in a realistic and affordable manner. The expertise is available in the region that needs to be shared so that all countries in the region can use it.

With regards to Physical Alteration and Destruction of Habitats; in this region we are mainly focusing on reviewing the legislation. We have worked very closely with parliamentarians, within the framework of global organisations of the parliamentarians, to look how we can best adopt existing legal legislation and helping the implementation and the enforcement. Further more we are looking at cost benefit and win-win analysis in the field of tourism, mining, aquaculture and ports and harbours. As such the Physical Alteration and Destruction of Habitats Project of the GPA really contributes to the implementation of the action area in the South Asian Seas Programme dealing with Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM).

As the last point, with regard to National Programme of Actions; where initial programmes have been developed in all countries in this region. The GPA Office stress three major points:

- Firstly, needs for the official adaptation of these programme at a national level so the action can be incorporated in the local and the national budget. I am happy to learn yesterday indeed that India is in the course of forwarding its Nations Programme of Action for adoption by the Government.
- Secondly, the need for highly visible and do-able pilot projects to gain the protocol and the public support for action at the protection of coastal zone and the marine environment. Because, I think the policy makers here will know, that it is very difficult to mobilise public and political support to protect coastal and marine environment.
- Thirdly, we want to stress that National Programme of Actions is an interactive process that should be repeated and refined on an ongoing process every time the governance or the local governments are reviewing their budget cycle.

This is just to give you a small overview of UNEP has been involved in the development of South Asian Seas Programme and how UNEP continue to support within its available resources for further development of the South Asian Seas Programme.

I would like to stress that we are now living in a different world than when SACEP and South Asian Seas Programme was initiated. There is thus a need to align the concepts and the mode of operation of the South Asian Seas Programme with the new realities. I would like to highlight three of these realities. First of all, the World Summit on Sustainable Development. With the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the global community has come to a crossroad. No longer it is sufficient to declare good intentions and made their declaration. The world and its people want us to go further. They want us to move us from planning to action. This will be a very big challenge to address at the Summit. Not that we want to renegotiate Agenda 21 but we want to agree on concrete action plan to implement Agenda 21. And that is when we all now, that require innovative thinking, innovative solutions; new partnerships including the private sector. There is huge task ahead of us that the regions should contribute.

Secondly, everywhere in the world, the regions are contributing to global programme of actions. South Asian Seas is one of these regions. There is a need to strengthen SACEP in a more effective manner at the global scale and a moment ago before this meeting, we had the opportunity under the leadership of Minister for Environment of Sri Lanka to discuss common position of this region to the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

But strengthening regional organisations also need that we have to rethink regional organisations. In this regard UNEP is looking very much forward to the review, which is currently being conducted on SACEP and SAS. UNEP is willing to support the recommendations coming out from this review and further helping in strengthening SAS, which is really able to cope with the new realities of today. Concrete terms, which I think that the Director General was already alluding to, that we need to review the institutional set up of the regional organisations. We need to see how we can better work together with all the existing regional organisations. I would like to highlight in the field of South Asian Seas Programme, the urgent need to collaborate more with the Asian Development Bank with ESCAP, with regional offices of UNEP and other major NGOs such as IUCN. We should redefine how indeed we can link SAS with these ongoing existing programmes and make sure that these programmes are mutually supportive and synergetic. Further we need to come up with a concrete action programme, an action programme which will capture the political attention and which we show to the people that indeed we are doing everything which is possible to protect marine and coastal environment. In that way the action on sewage and action on protecting coastal zones is extremely important. It is also required that we take the opportunity of this meeting to rethink the financial description of the SAS and the regional programmes. We all know only when only sufficient financial resources are available, regional organisation can indeed perform the task, which is required to do.

Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Delegates,

UNEP wishes to reiterate its commitment and support to the South Asian Seas Programme. We are looking forward to work the governments in the region and help them to implement the regional Seas programme in the South Asian Seas they wishing to see that come in to fruition.

Thank you very much.

**ADDRESS BY
HE ASHARF QURESHI,
HIGH COMMISSIONER IN SRI LANKA
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN &
CHAIRMAN,
1ST INTERGOVERNMENTAL MINISTERIAL MEETING**

Honourable Ministers,
Heads of Delegations,
Director General, South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme,
Representatives of International Organisations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since 1968 when the United Nations decided to convene a Conference on the Human Environment in 1972, Environment has remained a prominent item of the international agenda. The Declaration on Human Environment adopted in 1972 at Stockholm, Sweden emphasised that the defence and improvement of the human environment – both natural and man-made had become an imperative goal for mankind. The Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 were milestones where Member states took upon themselves responsibilities and obligations for a cause that was common to the entire humanity. Rio was followed by many landmark agreements, conventions, declarations and protocols. We have certainly come a long way. Fears of an environmental catastrophe are no longer restricted to research documents not to an undefined future. These fears have become real and tangible. If nothing is done, that undefined future may be in our own lifetime. We have to protect planet earth as a trust to be passed onto the coming generations.

It is true that environmental degradation recognises no boundaries but it is also true that sources of this menace can be easily identified. As members of the global community we have to ask ourselves whether we are fulfilling our commitments and the “common but differentiated responsibility” that we undertook. Regrettably the answer is in the negative. Progress on implementation of those solemn pledges made and responsibilities undertaken has been far from satisfactory.

Agenda 21, among other things, also called for integrated management and sustainable development of coastal areas, marine environmental protection, sustainable use and conservation of marine living resources, management of marine environment and climate change, strengthening international co-operation and co-ordination and sustainable development of small island states. As Director General, SACEP mentioned work on some issues had been taken up much before under Law of the Sea negotiation and convention.

Life on earth is linked to oceans. Oceans not only sustain life but also provide many vital resources and maintain a balance in the eco-system. Oceans cover 71% of the earth's surface. About 66% of the global population lives in the vicinity of the ocean or seashore and depend on seas for their livelihood. Oceans are therefore vital for life and their conservation is an inescapable imperative.

Regional approach to control marine pollution and the management of marine and coastal resources has long been advocated by the UNEP. In this context South Asian Seas region was established by UNEP in 1983 as one of the Regional Seas Programmes. It took more than a decade before South Asian Seas Action Plan was adopted in March 1995 and another two years before it came into force in January 1997.

The first Intergovernmental Meeting of Ministers (IMM) of South Asian Seas was held in Islamabad on 26 March 1999. The then Minister of Environment of Pakistan has the honour to chair that meeting. Much that the current Minister for Environment, Local Government and Rural Development would have like to be here today it was impossible for her to do so because of heavy commitments in Pakistan.

Between coming into force of SACEP and the first Ministerial Meeting there was a time lag, but it goes to the credit of SACEP that during this period, it carried out several interim activities including organisation of workshops and meetings. The First Intergovernmental Meeting of Ministers, inter alia, discussed and approved a number of priority projects, for Programming Cycle 1999-2002 under the four Priority Activities stipulated in the Action Plan. These Activities are:-

- (a) Integrated Coastal Zone Management
- (b) National and Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan
- (c) Human Resource Development through Strengthening Regional Centres of Excellence
- (d) Protection of the Marine and Coastal Environment from Land-based Activities

It was also decided that in future National Focal Points would meet once a year immediately preceding meetings of Ministers to take stock of all completed, ongoing and planned programmes and projects activities and decide on the Work Plan for the following years. In pursuance of the decision the National Focal Points met in Colombo from 28 - 29 June 2002. The draft report of that meeting is before you.

Progress on identified activities could have been more sustainable. We, however, have to keep in view various organisational problems faced by SACEP in executing its responsibilities. It would be in place and in staff for working against heavy odds and for the help and assistance extended by them to Member States.

Participation, encouragement and assistance offered by UN agencies and international organisations have been a source of strength to SACEP. It is gratifying that representatives of UNEP, International Maritime Organisation (IMO), International Oceans Institute (IOI), International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund (IOPC), Norwegian Water Institute and the United States Environmental Hub, Kathmandu, are with us in our deliberations. While we as Member States of SACEP need to renew our commitment to the programme we also seek the continued co-operation and support of the UN and International Organisations in our endeavours.

In conclusion, as I, on behalf of my Ministry, pass on the mantle of chairmanship of SASP to the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Hon. Mr. Rukman Senanayake, I am confident that under his able stewardship the South Asian Seas Programme would progress from strength to strength. We extend our full support and co-operation to him in discharging his duties.

**ADDRESS BY
HON. RUKMAN SENANAYAKE
MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
SRI LANKA**

Your Excellencies, Honourable Ministers from the South Asian Region, Distinguished Delegates from all the member countries of SACEP, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the Chairman of the SACEP Governing Council and the Minister in charge of the national focal point for the South Asian Seas Programme. It is a great privilege and honour to welcome you on behalf of my country and my Ministry, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Sri Lanka. It is indeed a great opportunity for us to further strengthen our regional cooperation and friendship.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

This is the Second Intergovernmental Meeting of Ministers of the South Asian Seas Programme, and the first Ministerial meeting was held in Islamabad, Pakistan in March 1999. The first meeting ended up as a fruitful session, making important decisions regarding the future of the South Asian Seas Programme. I hope today's meeting will also be very successful, and its contribution to the future development of the South Asian Seas will be remarkable, especially as we are going to sign the Memorandum of Understanding for the South Asian Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We should treasure our oceanic resources. We are surrounded by the Indian Ocean, and our coastal and marine ecosystem has diverse habitats such as coral reefs, estuaries, mangroves, sea grass beds, and salt marshes. All these habitats are very productive with a rich biodiversity. We cannot protect these marine and coastal resources without regional cooperation. Regional cooperation is very important in dealing with all our common environmental problems not only those associated with the marine resources. We have to protect our seas from human activities in our region, but we need to take measures to prevent the impacts from any such activities in other regions in the world. Indian ocean is one of the active seas in the world. Those activities can have negative impact on our marine resources. Unless we strengthen our regional position, we will not be able to make a voice at the global fora to protect our seas.

Distinguished delegates,

Sri Lanka is always supportive of the regional international cooperation. We have been very much concerned about the regional and global issues. I would also like to mention that Sri Lanka has become a member to all relevant environmental conventions and treaties, and my Ministry is the national focal point for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Montreal Protocol, Convention on Biodiversity, Convention to Combat desertification and Land degradation, Basel Convention, and Bio safety Protocol. My Ministry has been working as the National Focal Point for SACEP, and we have worked closely with all relevant national stakeholder institutions. I am pleased to mention that my ministry, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Sri Lanka has been very co-operative and supportive in the implementation of the South Asian Seas Programme and the SACEP activities as a whole; We have provided our maximum support to the SACEP in finalising the Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan and the MoU, and in organising the 8th Governing Council Meeting. We have also hosted the WSSD Regional Preparatory Meeting held in Colombo September 2001.

Nationally we are faced with several environmental problems including the disposal of solid waste, loss of biodiversity, soil erosion and land degradation, etc. When we consider the biodiversity, it is not only the biodiversity on land, even the biodiversity in the marine environment is also under threat specially the corals. Most of our corals are already dead and even those existing are under threat. Since their regeneration time is very long, we have to take substantial measures to conserve them. Among the factors that have contributed to coral reef destruction marine pollution is very important. Therefore, the Oil Spill Contingency Plan for the region, and the related MoU, would help protection of our marine environment, including the marine biodiversity.

Oil spills, no matter how large or small it is, can have very serious impacts. The ruin caused by miles of blackened beaches and destruction to the coastal habitat, fishery, tourism, and other industry can be very damaging both to the environment and to the economy as a whole.

The first National Oil Spill Contingency Plan was prepared in 1995 and revised in 1998. The purpose of this plan is to organise an integrated response action to prevent and mitigate pollution damages caused by the spills and wherever possible to restore the environment.

However, the country has limited resources to implement the plan effectively. There is a dearth of skilled personnel and required type of machinery and equipment for some of the more complex operations. Spill response equipment are available in Colombo for spills of size up to 100 m³/T. In the event of large spills, the mobilisation of foreign resources must be considered after the spill. It is in this regard that co-operation on the response to marine oil and chemical spills in the South Asian Seas is important.

Oil spills are a regional concern as its effects are not confined to the seas of one country alone, but go beyond and would cause serious damage to the seas of other surrounding countries as well. A Regional Oil Spill Chemical Pollution Contingency Plan for South East Asia was developed in 2000, in order to address such issues on a regional basis. The aim of this plan is to establish a mechanism for the following:

- i. Mutual assistance, under which the competent national authorities of Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka will co-operate in order to coordinate and integrate their response to marine pollution incidents either affecting or likely to affect the territorial sea, coasts and related interests of one or more of these countries; and
- ii. To incidents surpassing the available response capacity of each of these countries alone.

The plan is meant to organize a prompt and effective response to oil spills affecting or likely affect the area of responsibility of one or more of the countries concerned and to facilitate their cooperation in the field of oil and chemical spill preparedness and response.

Hence, the position with regard to the signing of the MoU for co-operation on the Response to Marine and Chemical Spills in the South Asia Region is positive. However, it is important that the following are clarified in the process;

- i. Establishment of a centre of excellence where the expertise can be provided as required.
- ii. A mechanism for training of personnel and staff that will be involved in such operations should be identified.
- iii. Mechanisms and modalities how the countries will assist each other in the event of oil spill.
- iv. The setting of a fund for financing such operations as the cost may be too high for a single country to bear.
- v. Ways and means of sharing joint patrolling operations.

Development of a South Asian Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan, and a Memorandum of Understanding for this Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan can be considered as important achievements under the South Asian Seas Programme.

During the National focal points meeting we had on the 28th and 29th, we were able to make important recommendations for the future programmes and activities under the South Asian Seas Programmes. I highly value the contribution given by all of you at the national focal points' meeting.

Today, Hon. Ministers from the member countries of SACEP will endorse the MoU for the South Asian Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan during the afternoon, towards the end of the session.

Although it has been there for several years, South Asian Seas Programme has not delivered the expected outcome yet. It is not needed to say that we have a tremendous potential to grow further. I believe you all will consider what we decided during the National Focal Points Meeting and what we adopted today seriously, and work very closely with the South Asian Seas Secretariat and among the national focal points. Once we develop a strong South Asian Seas Programme with a secretariat that can play a very proactive role, we will be able to get more support from international agencies such as the UNEP.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I take this opportunity to extend my great appreciation to Hon. Minister from Nepal, and all the other distinguished delegates from my country, and other countries of the region. I also wish to thank Hon. Mahinda Wijesekera, Minister of Fisheries and Ocean Resources of Sri Lanka, for his presence here today, at this very important meeting.

I wish today's meeting a great success and I thank you!

**VOTE OF THANKS BY
DR. SUREN BATAGODA
DIRECTOR, GLOBAL CONVENTIONS
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
SRI LANKA**

Your Excellency Ashraf Qureshi, High Commissioner of Pakistan, Chairman of SAS Programme
Honourable Rukman Senanayake, Chairman of the SACEP Governing Council and Minister of
Environment and Natural Resources, Sri Lanka,
Hon. P.L. Singh, Minister of Population and Environment of Nepal,
Hon. Mahinda Wijesekera, Minister of Fisheries and Ocean Resources of Sri Lanka,
Ms. Veerle Vanderweerd, Coordinator, GPA of UNEP,
Mr. Mahboob Elahj, Director General, SACEP,
Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

We have come to the end of the Inaugural Session of this important meeting we are having today. First of all, I wish to thank Hon. Rukman Senanayake, our Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of Sri Lanka for hosting this very important meeting, and the support given by him in the organisation of this meeting. Hon. P.L. Singh, we highly appreciate that you have come to grace this important occasion, and we hope you have enjoyed your short stay in Sri Lanka. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Hon. Mahinda Wijesekera, Minister of Fisheries and Ocean Resources of Sri Lanka for his presence here today, despite his busy schedule. Hon. Mahinda Wijesekera is expected to sign the MOU of the South Asia Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan on behalf of Sri Lanka, and he very willingly accepted the invitation by Hon. Rukman Senanayake, to sign the MOU on behalf of our country. However, we could not finalise the MOU as planned. We highly appreciate the presence of Hon. Wijesekera and once again thank for your commitment and all the support extended.

Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and High Commissioners, Distinguished Delegates, the Senior Officials from the Governments of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, thank you very much for gracing this occasion and thanks for your valuable time and contribution to this meeting; We highly appreciate your participation today.

I deeply appreciate the co-operation extended by the officers from the UNEP and other International Organisations who are present here today; especially we value the co-operation and support given by Mr. Eirik Adler, Ms. Veerle Vandeweerd of UNEP, Mr. John Ostergaard of IMO and Mr. Jay Pal Shrestha from the US Environmental Hub.

Finally, I wish to extend my sincere thanks to the Secretaries of the Ministries of Fisheries & Ocean Resources and Port Development & Shipping for their support, and the officials of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, especially Mr. Thosapala Hewage, the Secretary of the Ministry and other officials who have extended all their fullest co-operation in organising this meeting. I greatly acknowledge the support given by Mr. Mahboob Elahi, Director General, SACEP, Mr. Prasantha Dias Abeyegunawardene, Deputy Director Programmes and Mr. Pradyumna Kumar Kotta and other staff of the SACEP for working very co-operatively with the Ministry in organising this important meeting.

Before I conclude, I should mention to you that the Ministry was able to overcome a number of constraints faced in hosting this event. On behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka, I would like to apologise for any shortcomings you have faced with.

Thank you very much, and I wish you all a very pleasant and successful day.

SOUTH ASIAN SEAS PROGRAMME

2ND INTERGOVERNMENTAL MINISTERIAL MEETING OF
SOUTH ASIAN SEAS PROGRAMME
COLOMBO, SRI LANKA
1ST JULY 2002

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Election of Office Bearers
3. Adoption of Agenda and Organisation of Work
4. Statements by the Head of Delegation of Member Governments
5. Statements by United Nations Agencies, International/Regional Organisations and Aid Consortia
6. Presentation of Report of Preparatory Meeting of National Focal Points for 2nd IMM by Rapporteur
 - a) Approval of Organisational Structure of SASP
 - b) Approval of Work Programme for 2002 - 2004
 - c) Approval of Contributions to SAS Trust Fund & Secretariat Budget for the years 2002 - 2004
 - d) Adoption of Recommendations proposed by Preparatory Meeting of National Focal Points
7. Any Other Business
8. Adoption Report & Closure of Meeting

**STATEMENT BY
THE LEADER OF THE BANGLADESH DELEGATION**

Mr. Chairman,
Honourable Ministers
Director General, SACEP
Participants from South Asian Countries
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset, allow me, on behalf of myself and my delegation to congratulate you on your election as the Chairman of this Meeting. I thank the SACEP Secretariat for kindly organising the Second Intergovernmental Ministerial Meeting of the South Asian Seas Programme. My delegation also expresses its thanks to the Sri Lankan Government for providing local hospitality.

I am happy to note that since formation of the South Asian Seas Programme back in 1995, so far a number of activities have been undertaken by its secretariat, the SACEP, to protect marine environment of the region from pollution originating from land-based sources. It is also heartening to note that the South Asian Seas Action Plan focusing on integrated coastal zone management, development and implementation of national and regional oil-spill contingency planning and human resources development through strengthening regional centres of excellence is also receiving due importance by the countries of the region. I also believe that like our counterparts in other Regional Seas Programmes, we are not lagging behind.

The South Asian region has some of the largest biologically rich marine ecosystem, like the Gulf of Mannar, atolls of the Maldives, coastal lagoons, vast mudflats of the Gulf of Kutch and Jaffna and the mangrove forests of the Sundarbans. The atolls of the Maldives and few other areas form habitat for endangered marine turtles.

Bangladesh is happy to join the South Asian Seas Programme and committed to its implementation. Now let me draw your attention to Bangladesh scenario.

Sundarbans the largest mangrove forest in the world is our pride. It has been declared as the World Heritage Site and also a Ramsar Site. The rich mangroves forests of Bangladesh are facing threats of human interventions like oil pollution from ships, faulty shrimp cultivation conversions of mangrove areas into salt pans and upstream withdrawal of water causing salinity intrusions and top-dying of the Sundari trees.

Our second sea port, the Mongla in the south-western part of the country is hardly at a distance of 3 km north of the Sundarbans Reserved Forest. A 100 km long navigational channel runs through the forests. Without proper management, monitoring and risk assessment, the movement of oil and chemical products through the forest could be a potential threat to the area. Of late, we had to witness incidents of oil spill causing serious damage to the forests and its biodiversity.

The extensive mangrove area of the Sundarbans and its ecosystem are highly sensitive to pollution. Oil pollution does not only mean an immediate destruction of a large number of species and its habitat, but also that deterioration of the mangroves may lead to major changes in the sediment transport and erosion, thus changing navigational pattern of the area. Besides the Sundarbans, Mangrove plantations have been developed all along the coastline of Bangladesh. So, occurrence of oil spills in near shore and off shore areas of Bangladesh will cause damages to the mangroves and aquatic resources in the area.

Necessary equipment is not available to quantify the extent of pollution. No facility exists for any clean up operation after an oil spill. So the country has to depend on natural recovery, which is often a long-drawn out process and highly damaging to the coastal and mangrove ecosystem. There is also lack of awareness among our people in this regard. The need of taking adequate measures to minimise the extent of damage to the mangroves and other coastal resources have been long felt. We need to study the Impact of Oil Spill Contingency Plan which is yet to be prepared.

Under an Asian Development Bank assisted Project, we have recently concluded a programme on Oil Spill Impact and Response Management and hope to develop soon a National Oil Spill Contingency Plan.

Under the Sundarbans Biodiversity Conservation Project (SBCP) and Bangladesh-India Two-Country Approach in the Sundarbans, we have taken a number of programmes to conserve the World Heritage Site.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Guests,

I am please to inform you that the Bangladesh has decided in principle to sign the MOU for "Co-operation on the Response to Marine Oil and Chemical Spills in the South Asia Region". We believe, being a party to this document will help the region to combat marine oil pollution and undertake contingency planning.

Finally, once again, I would like to express my appreciation to the Government of Sri Lanka for the excellent arrangement and also to SACEP Secretariat for organising this meeting.

I thank you all.

**STATEMENT OF
SRI T. R. BAALU,
HEAD OF INDIAN DELEGATION AND
MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

I am deeply honoured to be present in this Second Inter Governmental Ministerial Meeting of South Asian Seas Programme being held in Colombo, Sri Lanka. I take this opportunity to thank the Government of Sri Lanka for the hospitality extended to the members of my delegation representing India. I am also grateful to the Government of Sri Lanka for organising this important event designed to examine some of the coastal and marine problems faced by countries in South Asia.

India has 13 coastal States and Union Territories, which are located along the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal. The total length of the coastline is around 7500 Km, which includes coastline of two groups of oceanic islands namely Andaman and Nicobars and Lakshadweep. We have a vast Exclusive Economic Zone of 20,13,410 Sq Km and territorial waters of 1,55,889 Sq Km. This vast coastline and the marine area harbours not only one of the most productive and diverse ecosystems but also several other resources. These unique and fragile ecosystems are extremely susceptible to changes in the ocean environment.

Coastal environment plays a vital role in India's economy by virtue of its resources, productive habitats and rich bio-diversity. Major economic activities requiring water front are invariably concentrated on the coast. It is well recognised that activities such as ports and harbours, aquaculture, tourism projects, industrial activities, mining, coastal townships could cause changes in geomorphological features and sediment movement along coastal waters. It is therefore necessary that the imperatives of sustainable development serve as the guiding principle in management of coastal areas.

The South Asian Seas region covering the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal and Southern part of the Indian Ocean is an important route for international oil tanker transportation and accounts for transportation of nearly 600 million tons of oil by about 3500 tankers. The tanker's route lies close to India's West Coast, Lakshadweep, Maldives, South India, Southern Sri Lanka and Great Nicobar Islands. Given the ecological sensitivity of some of these areas, the need to plan in order to minimise the impacts of oil pollution arising from an accident is apparent. The Indian Coast Guards who are the nodal agency for dealing with oil spill in the country have prepared a National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan. Formulating Contingency Plans with adequate infrastructure to tackle oil spill disasters is a pre-requisite to evolution of a regional strategy. Co-operation among the countries in the region is essential since the impact could spread across two or more countries. In this context, the effort made by the South Asian Seas Regional Programme to prepare the Draft Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan is a welcome initiative. I hope that a Contingency Plan will soon be finalised and made operational.

Pollution of Coastal areas and marine waters is one of the major issues that is affecting the biological resources and aesthetics of the coastal environment. The coastal area and the waters being at sea level are also affected by pollutants which are brought in by rivers and land runoffs which carry sewage and industrial effluents discharged several Km upstream in the rivers. Domestic sewage mainly from settlements, industrial effluents and land run-offs are the main causes of coastal water pollution. Treatment of domestic sewage, which is a major source of marine pollution, is an enormous task and, as we in India have realised from our own experience, requires a substantial investment. In this context it is necessary to take note of the objectives and action plans laid down by the Global Programme of Action for Prevention of Pollution of Marine Areas from Land Based Activities. My Government is in the process of finalising the National Programme of Action to Prevent Pollution of Marine Waters from Land Based Activities.

For the purpose of protecting the marine and coastal environment of India, the Government of India has issued a Coastal Regulation Zone Notification, 1991, which regulates developmental activities within 500 metres from the High Tide Line and the intertidal region of the country. All 13 Coastal States/Union Territory Governments have prepared Coastal Zone Management Plans demarcating ecologically sensitive areas, built up areas and rural regions.

My Government, taking note of the experiences of other developed countries, the strategies suggested in Agenda 21, Global Programme of Action for Prevention of Pollution of Marine Areas from Land Based Activities (GPA) and other international programmes for sustainable management of coastal areas and, further, keeping in view the socio-economic issues and developmental needs, has embarked upon preparation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plans. The activities initiated by my Government in this regard are :-

- (i) As a first step, Integrated Coastal Zone Management studies have been initiated for Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands through scientific institutions.
- (ii) Keeping in view the degradation of coastal ecosystems of the country, work relating to identification, mapping and digitization of the coastal ecosystems for the purpose of sustainable management of these ecosystems has been initiated.
- (iii) To facilitate the decision makers in the proper siting of the developmental activities, digitization of the Coastal Zone Management Plans prepared by the Coastal States and Union Territories has been undertaken.
- (v) For the purpose of training the members of Coastal Zone Management Authorities and other government officials responsible for implementation of coastal zone management, two scientific institutions have been strengthened.

My Government will be extremely happy to collaborate with other countries and carry out activities under South Asian Seas Programme in the area of coastal and marine area management. The in-house expertise available with our scientific institutions in the area of Integrated Coastal Zone Management and also India's experience in developing National Programme of Action can be shared with other countries in the region. India will be happy to receive support from the South Asian Seas Programme in the area of capacity building by way of strengthening of existing scientific institutions and information networking for effective management of coastal and marine areas of the country.

The coastal areas of my country face natural disasters such as cyclones, tidal surges and flooding that cause large scale destruction of life and property. The destruction caused by the super cyclone in Orissa is a case in point. Sea water intrusion into the coastal areas has to be monitored carefully since this phenomenon affects ground water and sweet water resources also. Yet another important area that needs careful consideration is the impact of sea level rise. Islands such as Maldives, Sri Lanka, Andaman and Nicobar, Lakshadweep and low lying areas of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh could face immediate danger on account of sea level rise. I would appeal to South Asian Seas Programme office to consider the dangers of sea level rise on priority and initiate scientific studies, which will help the countries of this region in tackling this problem.

I am happy to know that the South Asian Seas Programme has identified 4 priority areas that address the most pressing issues of this region. The 4 priority areas identified include preparation and implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management, Development and implementation of National and Regional Oil Spill Contingency Planning, Human Resources Development through strengthening regional centres of excellence and Protection of the Marine Environment from land based activities.

While taking up any management programme activity in the coastal and marine areas, it must be ensured that the stakeholders of the area get the benefit in an equitable and sustainable fashion. The users of coastal and marine areas have valuable insights regarding both the management needs and economic opportunities. Hence it is very important to keep the local communities involved right from the designing stage of any management programme.

I sincerely hope that this meeting organised by South Asian Seas Programme will come out with strong recommendations for developing Integrated National Coastal Zone Management Plans and also suggest a road map for environmental protection of coastal and marine areas.

**STATEMENT BY
THE LEADER OF THE MALDIVES DELEGATION**

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is indeed a great honour for me to address the 2nd Intergovernmental Ministerial Meeting of the South Asian Seas Programme on behalf of Hon. Ismail Shafeeu, Minister of Home Affairs, Housing and Environment of the Republic of Maldives. I convey to you, his sincere apologies, for not been able to be present here, due to pressing commitments at home.

Mr. Chairman, The Maldives is very committed to the course of environment. The Maldives is fully aware of the significance of working at local, national, regional and at global levels to address those challenges, which have direct impacts on the resources that we depend for our survival. Furthermore, as you may be aware, the very survival of our nation is also threatened due to causes beyond our control.

The South Asian Seas Programme and of course the work of SACEP is important and we are counting on SACEP to deliver to the regional efforts, which can have global significance in taking those environmental challenges posing as a threat to our survival and our lives.

Mr. Chairman, at the 1st Intergovernmental Ministerial Meeting in Islamabad in March 1999, several tasks were identified to be deliberated regionally. Although only a few of those activities managed to secure funding, what was more apparent is the increasing desire by the member countries to work together in the spirit of co-operation to address these issues regionally, while it may not be possible to move forward at a speed we desire, with some of the activities, the fact that a sense of "regionalism" is emerging, is a very clear omen that, we can look more fruitful outcomes in the region, to address the growing environmental deterioration.

SACEP, given its limited resources has no doubt, managed to keep the spirit going, and they should be congratulated for engaging International and Multi-lateral agencies, in the region to work towards the betterment of the countries in the region.

The Maldives for instance has benefited and has been very active with the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) and the Coral reef Degradation in the Indian Ocean (CORDIO) projects. Both these projects were co-ordinated through SACEP. SACEP has also managed to bring ICRAN, the International Coral Reef Action Network to the region. The issues identified here signify the regionalism: in them, and hence the need for regional co-operation.

Mr. Chairman, as you may know with the 1997-1998 incident of coral bleaching which struck the world, the Maldives, was one of the unfortunate victims; we are still struggling with the ill effects. With the help of our neighbours, we are able to keep monitoring and comparing our recovery rates with the others. All these tell us that we need each other to address some of these global environmental challenges, and together we can try to overcome the hurdles in our way.

Mr. Chairman, an incident of an oil spill in the South Asian Seas region will have disastrous consequence not only on our environment, but also on the economy and our Social well being. That is why we have to be ready with an Oil Spill Contingency Plan for the region-as no one country in the region has the capacity to tackle a major oil spill. The Maldives is committed to the Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan and will endeavour to sign Memorandum of Understanding, before too long.

While acknowledging the programme of work SACEP has formulated, for instance develop harmonised environmental quality criteria for sea water, the Global Programme of Action on Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based activities, Integrated Coastal Zone Management, Bio-diversity and Conservation, are no doubt, of regional significance, but will benefit individual countries in many ways.

Mr. Chairman, SACEP can only function with adequate resources, and we have to applaud SACEP for their efforts to keep the momentum going. The Maldives will make its contribution soon, and intends to clear the arrears as soon as possible.

Mr. Chairman, in less than 2 months World Leaders will meet in Johannesburg, South Africa, to review how much Agenda 21 has been implemented, to assess how far countries have moved towards the principles of sustainable development. We can only hope, that this event will recommit everyone to implementing Agenda 21 and of course making available the resources and technology for us to move in this direction. The Maldives is certainly committed to Agenda 21, and has moved forward in implementing sustainable development principle.

However, being the only Small Island Developing State in this region, we have to voice some concerns that is unique to us. Since our economy is so closely intertwined with our environment, and hence our social well-being, any event or process that threatens our environment is our serious concern. In this regard, I hope our member countries of the region sympathise with the Maldives and help to voice our concerns at a regional level. The threat of sea level rise or the fear of another bleaching event, all have given economic and hence social consequences. At the same time globalisation and economic restructuring is marginalising the small island developing states, like the Maldives. The Maldives believes it is extremely vulnerable to the global environmental and economic process at wake now.

**STATEMENT BY
THE LEADER OF THE PAKISTAN DELEGATION**

Honourable Ministers,
Head of the delegations,
Director General, SACEP,
Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset I, on behalf of my delegation would like to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the Second Intergovernmental Ministerial Meeting. I am confident that under your guidance and stewardship SASP would effectively succeed in implementing its programmes and projects. Your Chairmanship comes at an important juncture when we with other member states of the UN are preparing to participate in the Johannesburg Meeting on Sustainable Development.

On behalf of my country and my self, I would like to express thanks and appreciation to the government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka for hosting this important meeting. I would also like to congratulate the Director General of SACEP for preparing the excellent documentation and arrangements for this meeting.

Pakistan has been gifted with a frontage of about 990 kms located across the main sea trade routes and in close proximity of the Gulf in the Northern Arabian Sea. Pakistan provides a direct land route from Central Asia to the Arabian Sea. The North Arabian Sea is one of the most productive areas of the world oceans and is characterized by oceanic phenomena, such as up welling etc. resulting in production of rich fisheries resources. Fishing hence is the mainstay of coastal communities of Balochistan and Sindh province of Pakistan. Pakistan is endowed with diversified marine fauna, flora and fish resources, which form an important part of our bio-diversity.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to express firm commitment of the Government of Pakistan towards the preservation of marine environment in world seas, particularly in South Asian Seas. Government of Pakistan realizes that the integrity of coasts and oceans is under threat from unsustainable development and over exploitation. The discharge of hazardous and toxic wastes, land-based sources of population, the destruction of corals and mangroves, offshore drilling and mineral exploration, land exploitation, oil spills, marine accidents, excessive coastal tourism and over fishing have been identified as some of the main causes of marine environmental degradation.

Pakistan, at the nation level has taken a number of initiatives to combat marine pollution. Some of the major initiatives include the preparation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan (ICZM), setting up of port reception facility which include laboratory to monitor the quality of harbour waters, port reception facilities of ballast water, waste oil, noxious liquid substances, sewage and garbage from ships have been established in accordance with the requirements of MARPOL 73/78. Pakistan has also prepared National Programme of Action for the Protection of Marine Environment from Land Based Activities under the Global Programme of Action (GPA). The Plan was submitted to SACEP/IMO, which SACEP was to include in the Global Report. Pakistan has also prepared a draft National Oil Spill Contingency Plan which is been finalised in consultation with all the stakeholders.

My delegation calls for renewed commitment to the sustainable development of oceans and coastal resources through effective cooperation among national, sub-regional, regional and international institutions responsible for marine and ocean protection and management. We believe that the implementation of national, sub-regional and regional policies for enhancing the sustainable management and use of oceans and their resources for the promotion of total eco-system, marine resources for management through capacity building will not only result in effective implementation of the Convention on the Law of Sea, but will also go a long way in facilitating implementation of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal; Convention on Biological Diversity; Climate Change, MARPOL 73-78, particularly Annex I and II, OPRC-90 and other Marine Conventions.

Mr. Chairman,

Cooperation with agencies such as International Maritime Organization (IMO), UNEP and UNESCO in the implementation of marine strategies and plans is needed for the preservation of marine ecosystem of States of the South Asian Region. Donor agencies such as UNDP, ADB, World Bank and Global Environment Facility are urged to come forward to provide adequate funding for implementing the projects identified by the SASP Secretariat and the South Asian Seas Countries. We on our part will always be available to assist and promote any effort aimed at the preservation of marine environment particularly in the South Asian Seas.

Thank you very much

STATEMENT BY THE LEADER OF THE SRI LANKA DELEGATION

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates from all the member countries of SACEP, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Sri Lankan Delegation, it is my great pleasure to present you the statement from Sri Lanka at this important meeting.

This is the Second Intergovernmental Meeting of Ministers of the South Asian Seas Programme. As you know the first Ministerial meeting was held in Islamabad, Pakistan in March 1999. The first meeting concluded up as a fruitful session, making important decisions regarding the future of the South Asian Seas Programme. I hope today's meeting will also be very successful, and its contribution to the future development of the South Asian Seas will be remarkable. It is indeed a great opportunity for us to further strengthen our regional co-operation and friendship.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Oil spills are a regional concern as its effects are not confine to the seas of one country alone, but goes beyond administrative boundaries and would cause serious damage to the seas of other surrounding countries as well.

Oil spills, no matter how large or small they are, can have very serious impacts. The ruin caused by miles of blackened beaches and disruption to the coastal habitat, fishery, tourism, and other industry can be very damaging both to the environment and to the economy as a whole.

Recognising this problem early, the first National Oil Spill Contingency Plan was prepared in 1995 and revised in 1998. The purpose of this plan is to organise an integrated response action to prevent and mitigate pollution damages caused by the spills and wherever possible to restore the environment. The present plan aims to establish a mechanism for the following:

- i. Mutual assistance, under which the competent national authorities of Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka will co-operate in order to coordinate and integrate their response to marine pollution incidents either affecting or likely to affect the territorial sea, coasts and related interests of one or more of these countries; and
- ii. To incidents surpassing the available response capacity of each of these countries alone.

The plan is meant to organise a prompt and effective response to oil spills affecting or likely to affect the area of responsibility of one or more of the countries concerned and to facilitate their cooperation in the field of oil and chemical spill preparedness and response.

Therefore the signing of the MoU for co-operation on the Response to Marine and Chemical Spills in the South Asia Region is very important. However, our countries have limited resources to implement the plan effectively. There is a dearth of skilled personnel and required type of machinery and equipment for some of the more complex operations. Spill response equipment are available in Colombo for spills of size up to 100 m³/T. In the event of large spills, the mobilization of foreign resources must be considered after the spill. It is in this regard that cooperation on the response to marine oil and chemical spills in the South Asian seas are important. However, it is important that we should discuss following issues, particularly to implement the MoU.

- i. Establishment of a centre of excellence where the expertise can be provided as required.
- ii. A mechanism for training of personnel and staff that will be involved in such operations should be identified.
- iii. Mechanisms and modalities how the countries will assist each other in the event of oil spill.
- iv. The setting of a fund for financing such operations as the cost may be too high for a single country to bear.
- v. Ways and means of sharing joint patrolling operations.

Although it has been there for seven years, South Asian Seas Programme has not delivered the expected outcome yet. It is needless to say that we have a tremendous potential to grow further. Once we develop a strong South Asian Seas Programme with a secretariat that can play a very proactive role, we will be more productive and we will be able to get more support from international agencies, too.

Therefore we would like to request the IMM to consider the following steps to strengthen the Secretariat of the South Asian Seas Programme:

- a) To develop a clear time bound action plan with a budget and submit for the approval by the IMM or the Consultative committee.
- b) To investigate the establishment of Technical Co-ordinating Committee
- c) To review the Term of Reference of SACEP's role as the SAS Secretariat in order to build its capacity.

Finally I wish to thank the SACEP Secretariat for preparing the required documentation for this meeting.

I wish today's meeting a great success and I thank you!

**STATEMENT BY
MR. JOHN OSTERGAARD
SENIOR ADVISOR ON POLLUTION
INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION**

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

I deem it a great honour to be here this afternoon to deliver a statement on behalf of Mr. William O'Neil, the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization.

I wish to express my appreciation to the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and in particular to its Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources for hosting and supporting this Second Intergovernmental Ministerial Meeting of countries of the South Asian Seas region.

I would also like to thank Mr. Mahboob Elahi, Director General of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) and his staff for their efforts in planning and organising this event and for inviting IMO to attend this meeting.

Mr. Chairman,

As you are aware, IMO has been co-operating with this region for almost 10 years, and I would say that in particularly within the last 3 - 4 years after an invitation by SACEP has this co-operation been very close. IMO was invited to assist in the implementation of a number of international conventions related to maritime safety and protection of the marine environment and more, specific in particular the implementation of the MARPOL 73/78 and the OPRC 1990 conventions and also the development of a SACEP regional plan of co-operation in cases of major oil spills

Two of the outcomes of this co-operation are the draft Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan and the associated Memorandum of Understanding. I believe enough had been said about these two documents already, why I will abstain for saying anything further.

In addition to the regional framework documents, IMO in close co-operation with SACEP is planning to regional events before the end of this year.

Firstly: a regional training course for oil spill response on-scene commanders, to be held in November, here in Sri Lanka, and secondly, the Second Regional Workshop on Port Reception Facilities and implementation of the MARPOL Convention, to be held some time after 15th October this year. The location and the date for this event will be announced shortly.

In addition to these planned activities, IMO is prepared to provide support to Bangladesh and Pakistan on National Oil Spill Contingency Planning, as these two countries, according to information obtained by an IMO consultant in 1999, are most in need of such assistance.

Finally, depending on the outcome of MEPC 48, IMO is considering assistance for the development of reception facilities in connection with scrapping facilities in Bangladesh, and a more general Workshop on Reception of Ship Generated Wastes in connection with Ship Recycling Facilities some time during next year.

Thank you

**STATEMENT BY
MR. JAY PAL SHRESTHA
REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS SPECIALIST FOR SOUTH ASIA
REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL HUB FOR SOUTH ASIA
EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
KATHMANDU, NEPAL**

Honourable Ministers, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Ministry of Environment & Natural Resources of Sri Lanka and SACEP for inviting the U.S. State Department's Regional Environment Office for South Asia to participate as an observer to this very important meeting. It is indeed a great pleasure to be here amidst such an august gathering of committed leaders, officers and environmental experts from South Asia and beyond.

The protection and conservation of oceans, coastal environment and marine resources are some of the major objectives of U.S. Government's global environmental policy. It is indeed very encouraging to see the South Asian countries collaborating with UNEP to conserve the South Asian Seas, an area of tremendous natural beauty and rich biodiversity and also a source of livelihood for a considerable section of humanity.

I think there is tremendous potential for collaboration and partnerships between the South Asian Seas Programme and the Regional Environment Office for South Asia to promote the conservation of our oceans.

In this context, I would like to give you a brief introduction-an overview of our office, who we are, what our objectives are and what we are doing.

We are one of the twelve regional environment offices, also called "The Environment Hubs" of the U.S. State Department. These 'Environment Hubs' were set up since 1997 around the globe. The 'Hub' in Kathmandu looks after South Asian environmental issues. There are similar hubs for e.g. in Bangkok which address South East environmental affairs, in Amman, Jordan in San Jose, Costa Rica and so on.

SACEP with its limited budget and human resources have made a considerable contribution in the field of environmental management. They definitely need to be commended for their significant contributions. I am sure in days to come, SACEP will be reaching out to many international partners make itself heard and build partnerships for collaborating programmes. In this context, WSSD also holds great opportunities. I believe that arrangements between SACEP to meet many bilateral, multilateral delegations must have already been made. If there is an interest in SACEP to meet up with our U.S. Delegation at Johannesburg, we would be very glad to facilitate it.

In the same vein, we, in collaboration with our mission in Colombo is tentatively planning to hold a South Asia Regional Joint U.S. State and USAID Environment, Science and Technology Officers Conference in Colombo in early October 2002. The Conference, represented by U.S. Government's EST Offices would identify and prioritise regional environmental issues and prepare a strategic action plan to working collaboration with regional partners. The theme of the Conference will be "Working in Regional Organisations: Building Partnerships for Action". This would be an excellent opportunity for the South Asian Seas Programme and SACEP to present their programme activities and impress upon our colleagues the importance of this "Seas Initiative" first hand. This would generate support for the SAS Programme and open doors for potential collaboration with U.S. Government. Similarly, we plan to invite other prominent regional environmental organisations from South Asia of which many of them are housed right here in your very beautiful and cosmopolitan city of Colombo.

Thank you very much for your attention. I would like to especially thank the Government of Sri Lanka for their warm hospitality and finally I would also like to congratulate SACEP for holding such an important meeting and also thank for making our stay here in Colombo very pleasant and memorable.

REPORT OF PREPARATORY MEETING OF NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS FOR 2ND IMM

(Please see attachment)

**REPORT OF THE
PREPARATORY MEETING OF NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS
OF
SOUTH ASIAN SEAS PROGRAMME**



**28TH & 29TH JUNE 2002
COLOMBO, SRI LANKA**

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SOUTH ASIA CO-OPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

PREPARATORY MEETING OF NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS FOR SECOND INTERGOVERNMENTAL MINISTERIAL MEETING OF SOUTH ASIAN REGIONAL SEAS PROGRAMME

28TH - 29TH JUNE 2002

COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

REPORT

INTRODUCTION

1. The Preparatory Meeting of National Focal Points for the Second Intergovernmental Ministerial Meeting was held on 28th and 29th of June 2002 in Colombo, Sri Lanka.
2. It was convened in order to discuss all substantive issues on the agenda of Intergovernmental Ministerial Meeting to facilitate deliberations to the decisions at the Second Intergovernmental Ministerial Meeting.

ATTENDANCE

3. High-level delegates from the member countries of the South Asian Seas Programme (Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) attended the meeting. On special request delegations from Governments of Bhutan & Nepal also attended the meeting as members of SACEP.
4. Representatives from the following UN Agencies and International Organisations also attended the meeting: International Maritime Organization (IMO), International Oceans Institute (IOI), International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC), Norwegian Institute for Water Research (NIVA), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and US Environmental Hub for South Asia, Kathmandu.

The List of Participants is in Annex 1.

OPENING OF MEETING

5. The Chief Guest at the opening session was Hon. Mr. Rukman Senanayake, Minister of Environment & Natural Resources, Government of Sri Lanka and Chairman of the SACEP Governing Council. Mr. Mahboob Elahi, Director-General SACEP welcomed the delegates and outlined the tasks to be accomplished by the meeting. A copy of his address is given in Annex 2. Mr. Ellik Adler, Regional Seas Programme Co-ordinator, UNEP, Nairobi made a statement on behalf of UNEP and reiterated UNEP's commitment towards the strengthening of the South Asian Seas Programme. Mr. Thosapala Hewage, Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Government of Sri Lanka also addressed the meeting. He spoke of the importance of this meeting and the government's support for strengthening regional co-operation. The Chief Guest Hon. Mr. Rukman Senanayake, Minister of Environment & Natural Resources, Government of Sri Lanka then delivered his Inaugural Address. The copy of address is given in Annex 3. Mr. Prasantha Dias Abeyegunawardene, Deputy Director Programmes, SACEP delivered the Vote of Thanks.

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

6. In conformity with the Rules of Procedure of the Governing Council of SACEP, the following Office Bearers were elected.

Chairman	-	Mr. Thosapala Hewage	-	Sri Lanka
Vice Chairman	-	Dr. B. R. Subramanian	-	India
Rapporteur	-	Dr. Mohamed Ali	-	Maldives

ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND ORGANISATION OF WORK

7. The Draft Agenda prepared by the Secretariat for this Meeting was then discussed. Country delegations requested certain amendments, which were agreed upon. The adopted Agenda is contained in Annex 4.

INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

8. Under this Agenda Item, there were presentations made by Mr. Elik Adler of UNEP and by the Secretariat. The Secretariat also introduced the Working Paper SAS / NFP / IMM 2 / WP 1 titled "Institutional Matters".

The representative of UNEP reiterated UNEP's support and willingness to strengthen SAS component in SACEP and to provide programmatic guidance as well as financial support to establish a strong and efficient secretariat for SAS that will work under SACEP and will be responsible for the implementation of the approved programme of work.

The purpose of this Paper was to review the action taken with respect to the decisions on the structure and staffing of the Secretariat by the Meeting of Plenipotentiaries in March 1995 and 1st IMM in March 1999.

The Secretariat informed the meeting that out of the 3 positions (International Programme Officer - IPO, Local Programme Officer & Local Secretary), two positions except the International Programme Officer has been filled. SACEP added that the Consultative Committee had recommended the re-designation of the IPO post to Regional Director of SAS and that this recommendation be placed before the 2nd IMM.

The meeting noted that there has been a delay in recruiting an IPO/Regional Director and efforts should be made to fill up the post soon. SACEP clarified that due to non-provision of committed contributions from most of the member contributions to the SAS Trust Fund from where the salary of IPO has to be paid, the Secretariat was not in a position to do the recruitment.

For sake of clarity, it was decided to change the term International Programme Officer to Programme Co-ordinator.

The need for the establishment of National Co-ordination Committees has been specified in the SAS Action Plan. As such the Meeting requested that Member Countries to do so and inform its composition to the SAS Secretariat.

The proposed overall structure of the SAS Secretariat was also discussed.

The meeting has agreed to recommend to the IMM to start the recruitment procedures for the Programme Co-ordinator as soon as financial resources are available and has recommended that the Director General of SACEP will make the interim arrangements for SAS co-ordination and welcomed UNEP's offer to support an Interim Co-ordinator.

PROGRAMME MATTERS

9. Under this Agenda Item, the Secretariat introduced the Working Paper SAS / NFP / IMM 2 / WP 2 titled Programmes & Projects.

10. THE DRAFT REGIONAL OIL SPILL CONTINGENCY PLAN AND MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The above two documents were introduced by the representative of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Mr. John Ostergaard, Senior Adviser on Oil Pollution. There was also a presentation by the Mr. Masamichi Hasebe, representative of the International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC). He explained the advantages of membership to the 92 CLC and 92 Fund Convention and encouraged countries who are not a member of the 92 Fund to be members of the 92 Fund.

The countries informed their position on the adoption of the Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan and the signing of the MOU. While Bangladesh and Sri Lanka indicated their willingness to adopt the plan and sign the MOU, India, Maldives & Pakistan requested for more time. The meeting requested these countries to indicate their position within 6 months. After these countries convey their formal agreement, Sri Lanka and the Heads of Missions of the other SAS Member Countries in Sri Lanka can sign the MOU. The IMM will be requested to consider this.

11. WORK PROGRAMME WITH GLOBAL PROGRAMME OF ACTION (GPA) ON LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES CO-ORDINATION OFFICE, NETHERLANDS

The UNEP representative speaking on behalf of the GPA Coordination Office presented the current priority areas under the GPA. He also stated that GPA is giving the South Asian Seas Programme very high priority and that they look forward to working very closely with the SAS Programme.

The SAS Programme in their presentation listed out the following as their major activities with GPA Secretariat:

- a) South Asian Seas Workshop on GPA in October (1997)
- b) Development of Draft National & Regional Action Plans on the GPA (1999)
- c) UNEP / GPA Strategic Action Plan on Sewage Inventory of Socio-Economic Opportunities and Case Studies (1999)
- d) GPA Pilot Exercise on Regional Reporting for GPA Intergovernmental Meeting 2001
- e) Development of Pilot National Programmes of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities in Sri Lanka (2001)

The SAS Secretariat also spelt out the regional priorities, which will form an integrated part of the Secretariat's proposed work programme. These include:

- (i) Approval of Draft National Action Plans prepared by National Consultants for implementation of the GPA at a National Forum
- (ii) Regional Workshop to finalise Draft Regional Overview and Action Plan on the Implementation of the GPA and implementation of components of Regional Action Plan
- (iii) Development of National Pilot Programmes of Action for the Protection of Marine Environment from Land-based Activities

- (iv) Setting up of a Clearing House Mechanism for GPA in the South Asian Seas Region with South Asia Environment and Natural Resources Information Centre (SENRIC) functioning as the central node
- (v) Assistance for Development of a Proposal for a GEF Block B PDF Grant under the GPA

The Meeting noted that the International Ocean Institute (IOI) is currently preparing for the GPA Coordination Office, a Comparative Review of Coastal Legislation in the five SAS countries with special reference to Physical Alteration and Destruction of Habitats.

12. WORK PROGRAMME ON CORAL REEF CONSERVATION AND MONITORING WITH RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS.

The Secretariat in its presentation informed the meeting that at the first International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) Meeting for South Asia held in 1995 in Maldives the five maritime countries of South Asia unanimously decided that SASP should act as the nodal point for the regional ICRI activities. Since then SAS has established firm linkages with the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN), International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN) and Coral Reef Degradation in the Indian Ocean (CORDIO).

The proposed areas of activities in this programme area will be incorporated in the Work Programme for 2002 - 2004.

The representative of UNEP informed the meeting that UNEP has provided the financial and programmatic support to develop a proposal aimed at adding SAS as one of the other 4 Regional Seas Programmes to ICRAN activities.

13. WORK PROGRAMME WITH UNEP'S WORLD CONSERVATION AND MONITORING CENTER (WCMC) IN UK

The UNEP representative speaking on behalf of Dr. Mark Collins, Director of WCMC spelt out the background to WCMC and identified possible areas of co-operation with SAS, as elaborated in the document he had circulated on behalf of WCMC and in document SAS / NFP / IMM2 / WP 2 Annex 8. These possible activities in the field of Data and Information related to the biodiversity of marine and coastal ecosystems are included in the SAS Work Programme for 2002 - 2004.

14. DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES WITH THE NORWEGIAN INSTITUTE FOR WATER RESEARCH (NIVA)

Professor Harsha Ratnaweera presented the proposal on Development of Harmonised Environmental Quality Criteria for the Sea Water for the SAS region, which was based on the earlier proposal, prepared by the SACEP Consultant. The proposal is based on the Norwegian Methodology on the different uses of the marine environment and would develop criteria at the national levels, which will then be harmonised to fulfil the regional needs.

The meeting agreed on the importance of the proposal to addressing Land-based sources of pollution and requested the Secretariat to resubmit the proposal to potential partner agencies.

The meeting also agreed upon the importance of further developing the proposal and called upon SAS Secretariat and UNEP to establish contacts with NORAD in view of finding the resources required to implement the programme in the SAS region. Professor Ratnaweera mentioned that he assumes that with UNEP's back up and support the chances that the Norwegian Government will fund this proposal would increase.

15. FINALISATION AND ADOPTION OF WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2002 - 2004

The meeting was informed that that the 1st IMM approved the outlines of 10 projects identified under the 4 priority areas of the SAS action plan. These projects were as follows:

(a) **Integrated Coastal Zone Management:**

- (i) Capacity Building for the control of coastal erosion in the context of ICZM in the South Asian Seas Region - 1999-2000.
- (ii) Integrated Management of the Environmentally Sensitive Coastal and Marine Ecosystems - 2001-2002.
- (iii) Assessment of Areas Vulnerable to Sea Level Rise in the South Asian Seas Region

(b) **National and Regional Oil Spill Contingency Planning:**

- (i) Capacity Building in the Development and Operation of National Oil Spill Contingency Planning - 1999-2000.
- (ii) Updating and finalising of the South Asian Seas Oil Spill Contingency Plan - 2001-2002.

(c) **Human Resource Development through Strengthening Regional Centres of Excellence**

- (i) Identification of Capacity Building Requirements in Coastal and Marine Environmental Protection and Management - 1999 -2000.
- (ii) Strengthening the Capacity of the Regional Centres of Excellence in the Protection and Management of the Coastal and Marine Environment - 2001-2002.

(d) **Protection of the Marine and Coastal Environment from Land-Based Activities**

- (i) Identification and Assessment of the nature, extent, problems and causes of Marine Pollution from Land-based Activities and the Preparation of a National Programme of Action for Control of Land-based Sources of Pollution - 1999-2000.
- (ii) Development of National Water Quality Criteria for different uses of Sea Water - 2001-2002.
- (iii) Draft Project Proposal to GEF for a PDF Block B Grant

The outline of proposal on Integrated Management of the Environmentally Sensitive Coastal Marine Ecosystems was accepted by ADB and suitably modified for ADB funding. The Updating and Finalisation of the Regional Oil Spill Contingency Planning was taken up by UNEP and IMO. The Draft Project Proposal to GEF for PDF Block B Grant is currently been developed for the programme of work for the current period.

As indicated in document SAS / NFP / IMM2 / WP 3, seven detailed project proposals were developed with financial assistance of UNEP. The detailed project proposals were approved in a meeting of the National Focal Points and submitted to the partner agencies for funding.

The meeting felt that the countries should identify projects of national relevance under the priority areas of the action plan and implement these projects from available resources.

The meeting has agreed on the SAS Programme of Work for 2002 – 2004 as presented by the Secretariat, which is given in Annex 6 and requested that the Programme of Work will be presented to the IMM in a tabular form.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

16. REVIEW OF COUNTRY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MEMBER STATES FOR SOUTH ASIAN SEAS TRUST FUND AND SECRETARIAT BUDGET

The meeting noted with concern the lack of response from most of the member countries for their contribution to the SAS Trust Fund. Due to this the functioning of the Secretariat is affected. The member countries assured in the meeting that payment of their arrears and contributions for the year 2002 will be expedited.

The meeting approved the proposal made by the Secretariat on the budgetary requirements for the years 2002 - 2004 and the country contributions for these years. Since the meeting felt that proposed increase of 10% per annum would be difficult, the contributions from 2002 onwards would be the same as specified for the year 2001 and the need for an increase would be reviewed at the next IMM. The details are given below:

COUNTRY CONTRIBUTIONS FOR SAS TRUST FUND

COUNTRY		2001	2002	2003	2004
	%	US \$	US \$	US \$	US \$
Bangladesh	14.5	13,335	13,335	13,335	13,335
India	35.0	32,185	32,185	32,185	32,185
Maldives	6.5	5,975	5,975	5,975	5,975
Pakistan	29.5	27,130	27,130	27,130	27,130
Sri Lanka	14.5	13,335	13,335	13,335	13,335
TOTAL	100	91,960	91,960	91,960	91,960

SAS SECRETARIAT BUDGET FOR 2002 TO 2004

	2001	2002	2003	2004
	Cost in US \$			
PERSONNEL				
International				
Programme Co-ordinator	36,000	36,000	36,000	36,000
Local				
1 Junior Programme Officer	3,250	3,250	3,250	3,250
1 Secretary	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
OFFICE INFRASTRUCTURE				
Furniture, Office Equipment & Consumables	13,215	13,215	13,215	13,215
RENTAL AND MAINTENANCE	8,065	8,065	8,065	8,065
ADMINISTRATION COSTS	6,430	6,430	6,430	6,430
MEETING & INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL	12,855	12,855	12,855	12,855
DOCUMENTS	3,210	3,210	3,210	3,210
CONTINGENCIES	6,435	6,435	6,435	6,435
TOTAL	91,960	91,960	91,960	91,960
RECURRENT	78,745	78,745	78,745	78,745
CAPITAL	13,215	13,215	13,215	13,215

The meeting welcomed the information from the representative of IMO that an amount of US \$ 200,000 has been allocated for the South Asian Seas region for the purpose of training under OPRC and MARPOL during the biennium 2002-2004. He also stated that IMO is currently assisting the Governments of Bangladesh and Pakistan to develop their National Contingency Plans.

17. APPROVAL OF ANNUAL AUDITED REPORT OF ACCOUNTS FOR YEARS 1999 & 2000

The meeting examined the audited accounts for the above 2 years and recommended to the IMM that it be approved.

18. ANY OTHER MATTERS

The Sri Lanka delegation submitted 3 proposals to be considered under this agenda item.

- a) To request the SAS Secretariat & UNEP to explore the possibility of sharing experiences with other relevant Regional Seas Programmes.
- b) To investigate the establishment of Technical Coordinating committee including line agencies other than National Focal Points.
- c) To review the term of reference of SACEP's role as the SAS Secretariat in order to build its capacity.

The meeting requested the SAS Secretariat to study these three issues comprehensively and submit their findings to the National Focal Points and Consultative Committee for possible direction.

19. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT AND CLOSURE OF MEETING

The Meeting considered and adopted this Report on the 29th of June 2002.

The meeting also considered a document prepared by the Secretariat, which spelt out the recommendations that will be submitted to the IMM for endorsement. The agreed recommendations to the IMM are given below:

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2nd IMM

Noting that a Review Process of SACEP is ongoing and without precluding the outcome of this Review Process:

1. The IMM requests the SACEP Secretariat to commence with the recruitment procedures for the Programme Co-ordinator as soon as financial resources are available and requests the Director General of SACEP to make the interim arrangements for SAS co-ordination. The IMM welcomes UNEP's offer to financially support an interim co-ordinator.
2. Noting the urgent need for a Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan and also that only two member states are in the position to sign the associated Memorandum of Understanding, the IMM urges the other three member states to expedite their acceptance at an early date and requests the SAS Secretariat to make arrangements for signing the MOU immediately after these countries convey their acceptance.
3. The IMM endorses the programme of SAS as reflected in Annex 6 of the Report of the Preparatory Meeting of National Focal Points and calls upon UNEP, GPA Coordination Office, WCMC, IMO, NIVA and other potential partner agencies to continue to assist the Secretariat in securing the resources for the implementation of the programme.
4. The IMM urges the countries in the region to identify the projects of national relevance under the 4 priority areas of the SAS Action Plan and implement them using the resources available to them.
5. The IMM noted that most of the countries have not made their agreed annual contributions to the SAS Trust Fund. The IMM urges these countries to expedite the payment of their contributions and arrears. This will facilitate smooth functioning of the Secretariat and the implementation of the programme of work.
6. The IMM approves the budgetary requirements for 2002 - 2004 and the country contributions as reflected in the table below;

COUNTRY CONTRIBUTIONS TO SAS TRUST FUND

COUNTRY		2001	2002	2003	2004
	%	US \$	US \$	US \$	US \$
Bangladesh	14.5	13,335	13,335	13,335	13,335
India	35.0	32,185	32,185	32,185	32,185
Maldives	6.5	5,975	5,975	5,975	5,975
Pakistan	29.5	27,130	27,130	27,130	27,130
Sri Lanka	14.5	13,335	13,335	13,335	13,335
TOTAL	100	91,960	91,960	91,960	91,960

SAS SECRETARIAT BUDGET

	2001	2002	2003	2004
	Cost in US \$			
PERSONNEL				
International				
Programme Co-ordinator	36,000	36,000	36,000	36,000
Local				
1 Junior Programme Officer	3,250	3,250	3,250	3,250
1 Secretary	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
OFFICE INFRASTRUCTURE				
Furniture, Office Equipment & Consumables	13,215	13,215	13,215	13,215
RENTAL AND MAINTENANCE	8,065	8,065	8,065	8,065
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DOCUMENTS	3,210	3,210	3,210	3,210
CONTINGENCIES	6,435	6,435	6,435	6,435
TOTAL	91,960	91,960	91,960	91,960
RECURRENT	78,745	78,745	78,745	78,745
CAPITAL	13,215	13,215	13,215	13,215

The IMM accords flexibility to the Director General of SACEP in incurring the above expenditure with due approval from Consultative Committee.

- The IMM approves the Audited Accounts of the South Asian Seas Programme for the years 1999 & 2000.

20. CLOSURE OF MEETING

The Chairman Mr. Thosapala Hewage thanked all delegates for their co-operation in making this meeting a success.

Dr. B. R. Subramanian speaking on behalf of all the delegates thanked the SAS Programme for conducting this meeting in a very professional manner and thanked the Government of Sri Lanka for their very warm hospitality.

SOUTH ASIAN SEAS PROGRAMME

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**WELCOME ADDRESS BY
MAHBOOB ELAHI
DIRECTOR GENERAL
SOUTH ASIA CO-OPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME**

**Mr. Chairman
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen**

At the outset, allow me to welcome all country delegations, invitees and observers to the Senior Officers' segment of the Second Inter-governmental Meeting of Ministers of South Asian Seas Programme, being hosted jointly by SACEP, Secretariat in Colombo and the Government of Democratic Republic of Sri Lanka coordinated by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources in close collaboration with Ministries of Foreign Affairs; Fisheries and Ocean Development; Ports Development and Shipping.

Mr. Chairman,

You would kindly recall that this meeting has been convened on the special direction of the Hon. Minister Environment and Natural Resources, Government of Sri Lanka Mr. Rukman Senanayake in his capacity as the Chairman of SACEP Governing Council with two obvious objectives. Firstly the 2nd IMM of SAS Programme has since being long due after the first meeting, which was held in March 1999 in Islamabad, Pakistan. Secondly, to provide an opportunity to all member countries of South Asia to formally and informally share and exchange their views and thinking on the preparatory process leading to the World Summit on Sustainable Development schedule to be held in August-September this year in Johannesburg, South Africa. For the later, special session of the Governing Council of SACEP is scheduled to be held on 30 June 2002. It will be partly spent in the Hotel and partly in Yala National Park about 16 km. away in serene nature setting.

This meeting of South Asian countries will help us to engage in a constructive dialogue about the position of South Asian countries would pursue at the WSSD. This initiative on the part of Minister Rukman Senanayake and supported by Hon. Minister for Environment and Forest, Government of India, Mr. T. R. Baalu and Mr. P. L. Singh, Minister of Environment and Population who is also the Vice Chairman of the SACEP Governing Council is novel on many accounts. We are also thankful to the countries of South Asia for their High-level delegations lead by and/or supported by the High Commissions/Embassies of these countries based in Colombo, Sri Lanka. I must mention here that High Commissions/Embassies of the countries of South Asia have been regularly meeting and overseeing and guiding the work of both SAS and SACEP.

My colleagues and I will be making short presentation on each agenda item. I would like to highlight some of the strategic issues that have kept us engaged during the period for your guidance for their continuation in the coming years as under:

- (i) Currently SACEP is undergoing an external review by a three-member panel comprised of the former Secretaries, Ministries of Environment and Forest, Government of India, Sri Lanka and a leading NGO of Bangladesh. The Review Panel has already commenced the work and its report will be available within next two months. UNEP has provided funds to the extent of US \$ 45, 000/- for this purpose. It is hoped that the recommendations of this review Panel will help confidence building on SACEP's capacity and capabilities to engage as a lead-environmental organization of the region.
- (ii) South Asian Seas Programme is one of the new members of UNEP's Regional Seas Programme. We have received positive indications from UNEP's Regional Seas Programme Office at Nairobi and UNEP GPA Office at The Hague to assign priority to South Asian Seas Programme in their future programmes activities by diverting some of their resources which have become available after some

of the pioneer Regional Seas Programmes have mature and are now on their own such as Mediterranean Sea, Wider Caribbean and Caspian Sea Programmes. In this regard we must recognise presence of Dr. Veerle Vandeweerd, Coordinator, Coordination Office of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA/UNEP) and Mr. Elik Adler Regional Seas Programme Coordinator of UNEP Regional Seas Programme who have travelled all the way from The Hague, the Netherlands and Kenya, Nairobi to join in this meeting. We are looking forward to their statements which will undoubtedly guide the South Asian Seas Programme to become much more effective.

- (iii) The countries of the region have long been concerned with the problems of marine pollution due to oil spill. A Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan has accordingly been prepared with the help of International Maritime Organization (IMO) which will be ready for adoption in this meeting in the form of MOU which was already forwarded to the country governments for their endorsement. It will be indeed a major accomplishment for the donors to see countries of this region working together for a common pursuit for the safeguard and protection of our exclusive economic zones and high seas.

SACEP is proposing the development of five RAC for the South Asian region in the areas of Biodiversity; Land-base pollution; Oil spills; Assessment and Monitoring and Integrated Coastal zone Management. This idea is not new to other regional seas programmes such as Mediterranean, Black Sea and the North-West Pacific where several of the activity centres are now in good operational conditions. For example in the North-West Pacific Region the Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response Regional Activity Centre (MER/RAC) was developed for effective measures for regional cooperation in marine pollution preparedness and response in the region in 2000. In the Black Sea Environmental Programme strong RACs have been developed in member countries on monitoring, fisheries, shipping ICZM, and Biodiversity

SACEP should indicate the establishment of partnerships with other intergovernmental, non-governmental organisations, donor communities and the private sector. When preparing New Project Proposals preference should be given to TYPE 2 as after the world summit the donor community will be moving towards project, which establishes partnerships.

SACEP has three members, which are land-locked. These include Afghanistan, Bhutan and Nepal. Considering that land base sources of pollution are responsible for 70% of marine environment degradation etc. These countries will also be mainstreamed into South Asian Seas Process, which will be a unique feature of partnership for achieving the goal of sustainable development of marine and coastal areas.

Organisations such as CORDIO, GCRMN, UNEP, ICIRI, ICRAN, IUCN, WWF, SAARC, GEF, NORAD, SIDA, USAID, FAO, WB, ADB, Convention Secretariats (Regional Seas, Migratory Species, Ramsar, Climate Change, IMO, Biodiversity) and various government departments must be included in the establishment of network on coastal and marine ecosystem conservation and management.

We also intend to initiate the development of specific scientific networks such as Network for South Asia Marine Protected Area Managers/Conservation of Marine turtles, Mangroves, coral reefs etc., and facilitate symposia/meeting/workshops where the participants can share their experiences and gain knowledge to deal with new challenges.

SACEP is also planning to initiate producing regional publications on issues relevant to coastal and marine environment, using the publications from other Regional Seas Programme as the base material for adoption.

We also intend to house a documentation centre in SACEP with specialized collection of books, journals, CDs, Reports etc., on coastal environmental issues related to the South Asian region.

I thank you Mr. Chairman and other delegations for your attention.

**INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY
HON. RUKMAN SENANAYAKE
MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
SRI LANKA**

Distinguished Delegates from all member countries of the South Asian Seas Programme, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the Minister in charge of the National Focal Point for the South Asian Seas Programme and the Chairman of the SACEP Governing Council, which functions as the Secretariat for the South Asian Seas Program, I warmly welcome you all to my country, Sri Lanka and to this important meeting. It is in deed a great honour for me and my Ministry, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Sri Lanka to host this very important meeting. I sincerely hope you will have a memorable stay in this beautiful country.

Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the Preparatory Meeting for the Second Intergovernmental Meeting of Ministers of the South Asian Seas Programme, which is held after three years from it's first meeting held in Islamabad, Pakistan in March 1999. According to the Action Plan of the South Asian Seas Programme, the Intergovernmental Ministerial meetings shall normally be held every two years, or as the need arises. Unfortunately, we were not able to convene this meeting last year due various reasons. Considering the national and regional importance to protect our seas, my Ministry decided to host this important meeting here in Colombo.

Since we all are organising this meeting with financial constraints, it is our duty to make maximum output from this. As you all are aware, we have to accomplish a very important task during this meeting; that is to adopt the South Asian Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan and to endorse the Memorandum of Understanding. In achieving this mission, you, the senior officials and the experts in the field have a great responsibility during these two days of the senior officials' meeting. You are well aware that the adoption of a meaningful action plan or a policy document is dependent upon the success of your deliberation.

Under the South Asian Seas Programme, and in line with the action plan for implementation of this programme, we, the members of SACEP, have developed a South Asian Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan, and a Memorandum of Understanding for this Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan. These two documents were heavily discussed and revised at a High Level Meeting held in Colombo from 4th - 6th December 2000. I hope that in these two days you, the senior officials will be able to further refine and develop these two documents for Hon. Ministers to endorse at the Ministerial Meeting on the 1st July.

At this important meeting we will also be discussing the programme of activities for the period of 2002 - 2004. Among them institutional matters, financial matters, new projects and programmes on marine biodiversity, and programme of action for the protection of the marine environment from land-based activities are important.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My Ministry has been working as the National Focal Point of the SACEP and South Asian Seas Programme and has worked closely with all the relevant national stakeholder institutions. I am pleased to mention that my ministry, the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Sri Lanka has been very co-operative and supportive in the implementation of the South Asian Seas Programme and the SACEP activities as a whole. In addition to providing support in the implementation of the Regional Seas Programme, and activities related to the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), we have provided our maximum support to the SACEP in finalising the Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and in organising the WSSD Regional Preparatory Meeting held in Colombo last September. I would also like

to mention that my Ministry, or the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources hosted the 13th Meeting of Parties to the Montreal Protocol in last November.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I do not think I should reiterate that the South Asian Seas Programme has not yielded delivered the expected outcome yet. Even though we were able to initiate several programmes such as Coral Reef Initiatives, Development of the Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan, we have a tremendous potential to grow further. When we are compared to other Regional Seas Programmes such as the Caribbean Seas Programme, we are far behind. We have to learn a lot from them.

I believe that we should proactively develop projects and programmes and seek international support for the implementation of such programmes. Since the marine resources are global goods, we will be getting support from international agencies such as the UNEP. Therefore, I request you, the distinguished delegates, to have a meaningful dialogue during these two days, and develop a proactive work programme to strengthen the South Asian Regional Seas Programme, in order to protect our important marine resources. I am sure during the Ministerial meeting we can adopt a meaningful regional programme.

I wish this meeting a great success and hope you will have a pleasant stay in Sri Lanka.

SOUTH ASIAN SEAS PROGRAMME

PREPARATORY MEETING OF NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS FOR 2ND INTERGOVERNMENTAL MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE SASP COLOMBO, SRI LANKA 28 -29 JUNE 2002

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Election of Office Bearers
3. Adoption of Agenda and Organisation of Work
4. Institutional Matters
5. Programme Matters
 - (a) Work Programme with International Maritime Organization, UK
 - i. Endorsement of MOU on Regional Oil Spill Contingency Planning
 - ii. Setting up of Port Reception Facilities for implementation of MARPOL Convention
 - (b) Work Programme with Global Programme of Action on Land-based Activities Co-ordination Office, Netherlands
 - (c) Work Programme on Coral Reef Conservation and Monitoring with relevant International Organisations
 - i. International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)
 - ii. Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN)
 - iii. Coral Reef Degradation in the Indian Ocean (CORDIO)
 - iv. International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN)
 - (d) Areas of Co-operation between UNEP's Division of Environmental Conventions
 - (e) Work Programme with UNEP's World Conservation and Monitoring Centre, UK
 - (f) Establishment of Regional Activity Centres (RAC) in the priority areas of the SAS Action Plan
 - (g) Development of programme activities with the Norwegian Water Institute (NIVA)
 - (h) Development of programme activities with the Multilateral Environment Agencies
 - (i) Finalisation and Adoption of Work Programme for 2002 - 2004
6. Financial Matters
 - (a) Review of Country Contributions from Member States for South Asian Seas Trust Fund
 - (b) Approval of the budgetary resources required to support the work plan for 2002 - 2004
 - (c) Agree upon the means for financing activities of the programme, including pledges for contributions to be made in cash and kind by Governments and other organisations
 - (d) Approval of Annual Audited Report of Accounts for years 2000 & 2001
7. Any Other Business
 - (a) SAS Secretariat & UNEP to explore the possibility of sharing experiences with other Regional Seas Programmes
 - (b) Establishment of Technical Co-ordinating Committee
 - (c) To review the Terms of Reference of SACEP's role as SAS Secretariat
8. Adoption Report & Closure of Meeting

PROGRAMME OF WORK 2002 - 2004

INTEGRATED COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT

PROJECT TITLE	TIME FRAME	ESTIMATED BUDGET IN US \$
1) Capacity Building for the control of coastal erosion in the context of ICZM in the South Asian Seas Region <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Development Meeting • Workshop on Coastal Erosion 	12 Months	40,000 95,000
2) Assessment of Areas Vulnerable to Sea Level Rise in the South Asian Seas Region	18 Months	406,500

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL OIL SPILL CONTINGENCY PLANNING:

PROJECT TITLE	TIME FRAME	ESTIMATED BUDGET IN US \$
1) Capacity Building in the Development and Operation of National Oil Spill Contingency Planning	12 months	336,775 (3 seminars / Workshops)
2) Capacity Building Activities with IMO	24 Months	200,000

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH STRENGTHENING REGIONAL CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

PROJECT TITLE	TIME FRAME	ESTIMATED BUDGET IN US \$
1) Identification of Capacity Building Requirements in Coastal and Marine Environmental Protection and Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Development Cost of Course Material and Course expenses for 8 Courses	12 Months	75,000 600,000
2) Strengthening the Capacity of the Regional Centres of Excellence the Protection and Management of the Coastal and Marine Environment	6 Months	225,000

PROTECTION OF THE MARINE AND COASTAL ENVIRONMENT FROM LAND-BASED ACTIVITIES

PROJECT TITLE	TIME FRAME	ESTIMATED BUDGET IN US \$
1) Approval of Draft National Action Plans prepared by National Consultants for implementation of the GPA at a National Forum	6 Months	5,000 per country for 7 countries
2) Regional Workshop to finalise Draft Regional Overview and Action Plan on the Implementation of the GPA and implementation of components of Regional Action Plan	6 Months	30,000
3) Development of National Pilot Programmes of Action for the Protection of Marine Environment from Land-based Activities	18 Months	75,000 per country for 5 countries
4) Setting up of a Clearing House Mechanism for GPA in the South Asian Seas Region with South Asia Environment and Natural Resources Information Centre (SENRIC) functioning as the central node	To be determined	To be determined
5) Participation in GPA Project on Physical Alterations and Destruction of Coastal Habitats: Guidelines for Action and Role of Stake Holders	To be determined	To be determined
6) Assistance for Development of a Proposal for a GEF Block B PDF Grant under the GPA	To be determined	To be determined

WORK PROGRAMME WITH WORLD CONSERVATION MONITORING CENTRE

PROJECT TITLE	TIME FRAME	ESTIMATED BUDGET IN US \$
1) Regionalisation of global datasets: UNEP-WCMC maintains global datasets on marine ecosystems, threatened marine species and threats to marine biodiversity.	To be determined	To be determined
2) Evaluation under World Heritage Convention of tropical coastal ecosystems in World Heritage Sites	To be determined	To be determined
3) Use of internet technology to foster horizontal linkages and facilitate data sharing and information exchange between different SACEP and other Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans;	To be determined	To be determined
4) Capacity building with UNEP-WCMC in training in the areas of its core competencies	To be determined	To be determined

OTHER PROJECTS

PROJECT TITLE	TIME FRAME	ESTIMATED BUDGET IN US \$
1) Development of National Water Quality Criteria for Different Uses of Sea Water with NIVA	24 Months	2,000,000
2) 2 nd Regional Training Course for Management of Protected Area Coral Island Ecosystems in the Indian Ocean	2003	50,000
3) Work Programme with Coral Reef Degradation in the Indian Ocean (CORDIO) a) Alternatives Livelihoods for Dependents of Coral Reefs b) Providing Information for Decision Making for Sustainable Use and Management of the Coral Reefs of Sri Lanka	2002 - 2003	20,000
4) Development of Type 2 project under ICRAN	2 Months	9,000
5) Participation in Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA) Work Programme - Bay of Bengal (Bob) Sub Regional Assessment		
6) Participation Sustainable Management of the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem - FAO - GEF Project		
7) Participation in activities connected with the Indian GOOS Programme		