Prime Minister, R. Premadasa yesterday said that South Asia urgently needed an alternative development model and such a model should be based on principles of self-reliance, popular participation and utilization of local resources.

The Prime Minister was delivering the inaugural address at the first Governing Council of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Program (SACEP) at the BMICH yesterday.

Mr. Premadasa called upon the SACEP to address its mind on the possibilities of modifying the prevalent pattern of development and lifestyles to suit the cultural patterns and traditions on the region.

The Prime Minister, who stressed the importance of environment to development said: "It is still fully not realised that development and the process of development rests mainly upon the underpinnings of the environment. The environmental underpinnings of our economic systems have to be made secure. We have to provide evidence of being able to sustain present and future development. Otherwise economic dislocations and outright breakdown would become the dominant feature in the years ahead of us."

"The environmental and developmental problems that we face are daunting. Our problems are widespread poverty and unemployment coupled with large and growing populations require fundamental and innovative thinking" the Prime Minister added.

Trade and Shipping Minister Lalith Athulathmudali, who presided, said that in their eagerness for development the South Asian countries should not sacrifice the environment. Many developed countries raised the living standards of their citizens but damaged the environ-