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Landmark UNEP-SACEP agreement signed

by Florence Wickramage

A landmark agreement for mutual co-operation was entered into between the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the South Asia Co-operative Environment Program (SACEP) at the recently concluded 22nd Governing Council Meeting in Nairobi, Kenya.

Environment and Natural Resources Minister Rukman Senanayake who led the South Asian Environment Ministers' Delegation to a meeting with Kalus Toepfer, Executive Director of UNEP is the current Chairman of SACEP Governing Council.

Through the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) UNEP will provide assistance towards the capacity building activities; implementation of the multilateral environmental agreements through regional cooperation; promoting public awareness; etc. UNEP will also assist to achieve a strategy Plan for the implementation of the Secretariat's activities for endorsement by the regional governments.

The MoU was signed by Dr. Kalus Toepfer, Executive Director UNEP and Mahboob Elahi, Director General SACEP. Associated with the MoU was the newly appointed UNEP Regional Director for Asia and Pacific Mr. Surendra Shrestha.

The South Asian Ministers who attended the UNEP Governing Council were Jafrul Islam Chowdury, Minister of Environment & Forest, Bangladesh; Dasho Nado Rinchchen, Minister of Environment, Bhutan; Kamal Prasad Chaulagain, Minister of Population and Environment, Nepal and Major (Retd) Tahir Iqbal, Minister of State (in charge) for Environmental Pakistan. India was represented by K.C. Misra, Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests.



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