

EDITORIAL

Environment is the common bond that transcends all barriers between nations and humans be it caste, colour or creed. It could be aptly described by what Delhi's wailing Urdu poet Mir Taqui Mir, bemoaned in the last century, although in a different context - "be it me, you, or the poet, all are captives of the same lock of hair."

One must remember that we all live on one Earth and our dependence is on one biosphere for the sustenance of life. Each of us strives for survival with little or no regard to the consequences and the impact on others. Consumption of earth's limited resources in some countries are alarming whilst others consume far too little and thereby live with a threat of hunger, poverty and early death. There needs to be a global concern and a stronger sense of awareness making this one earth a safer and sounder home for us and for the future generations.

Our own region, South Asia, is a region, where five of SACEP's member countries have been classified by the United Nations System as least developed countries. Our region has a population of over one billion people. While other regions in the world have reduced their birth rates, South Asia continues to grow at an average rate of 2.1 per cent a year. Threats of over population, poverty, desertification coupled with numerous instances of natural disasters have made this region possibly the most ravaged in the world. The need to harmonize the relationship between alleviation of poverty, Conservation of scarce natural resources and development is most felt here. It has to be reiterated that the States in the region have to adopt such development policies that integrate production with

resource conservation and enhancement and aim at the concept of sustainable development. Such development approach provides a framework for the integration of environmental policies and development strategies and will meet the needs and aspirations of present without compromising the ability to meet those of the future.

Though for a variety of historical reasons, the countries of South Asia never embarked on a regional programme, it was the need for the protection of the environment and the recognition of the necessity to work together in close co-operation for its management, that brought about the formation of SACEP.

SACEP since its formation in 1982 has gone through many a turbulent period especially due to the lack of a firm financial basis. However, with the recently concluded Governing Council Meeting, SACEP has probably turned the corner. The Member States attending the Meeting finally agreed on a financial arrangement which would not only strengthen the Secretariat, but would also provide resources for supplementing projects funded by other organisations.

The review of present projects and programmes and the formulation of an Action Plan for the next five years, the possibility of finalising an Environmental Education Programme for South Asia in collaboration with UNESCO were some of the other important decisions arrived at this Meeting.

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SACEP COUNTRIES CELEBRATE
DAY OF TREES FOR SOUTH ASIA

As decided by the Governing Council of SACEP in 1983 and later endorsed by the Governing Council of UNEP, the year 1988 was declared as the Year of the Trees for South Asia.

With a view to commemorating this Declaration, the Consultative Committee of SACEP recommended to its Member Countries to designate the 8TH OF MARCH 1988 as the DAY OF TREES FOR SOUTH ASIA and requested them to undertake symbolic activities at National Level to commemorate this occasion. The response received from the Member Countries was most encouraging and the following activities were undertaken by the Member Countries.

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| AFGHANISTAN | - | Inauguration of a Tree Planting Campaign in the major cities by ceremonial tree planting ceremony.

An Essay competition for school children on the importance of Trees.

A public seminar in connection with the Day of Trees for South Asia. |
| BANGLADESH | - | Distribution of planting materials to the general public.

Joint activities with service organisations.

Photographic competition. |
| BHUTAN | - | A poster competition between the schools for promoting Tree Planting.

Planting of Trees on the main avenues of principal Towns. |
| IRAN | - | Planting of Trees in bare areas.

Special Articles in the Newspapers. |
| MALDIVES | - | A painting competition in schools on the importance of Trees.

Distribution of the Year of the Trees pamphlets. |
| NEPAL | - | The clearing, pruning, thinning and replacement of Avenue Trees planted along roadsides of Kathmandu urban areas.

Ceremonial Tree Planting ceremony. |

PAKISTAN

- Panel discussion on Radio and TV.

Essay competition for schools.

Public seminar on the importance of Trees.

SRI LANKA

- Planting of one mile stretch of Highway with trees which will be beneficial to the general public.

Symbolic ceremonies in each district.

Series of Programmes on Radio and Television.

The UNEP's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific was also associated with the SACEP Secretariat, by providing financial support for these activities.

DAY OF TREES
CELEBRATION IN
COLOMBO, SRI LANKA.



DAY OF TREES
CELEBRATION IN
KATHMANDU, NEPAL.

FOURTH GOVERNING COUNCIL
MEETING OF SACEP

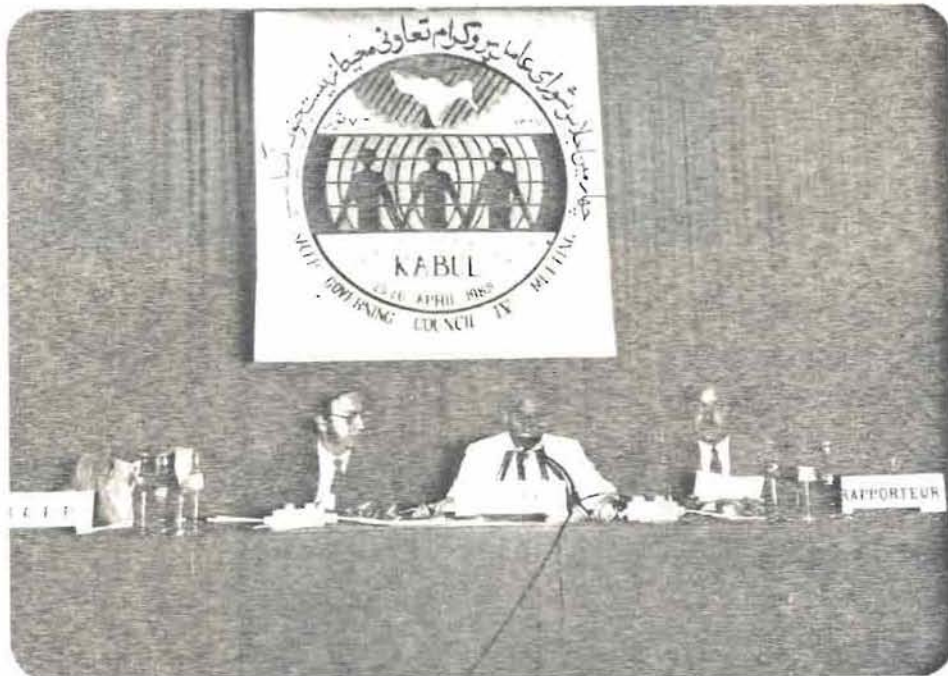
The Fourth Governing Council Meeting of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme was held in Kabul, Afghanistan on the 25th and 26th of April 1988.

This meeting was attended by representatives from the following member countries, namely : Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, Iran and Sri Lanka, whilst there were also representation from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), World Health Organisation (WHO), and World Food Programme (WFP).

The Honourable Sultan Ali Keshtmand, Prime Minister of the Republic of Afghanistan inaugurating the meeting, pointed out that there is a close inter-relationship between environmental protection and world peace which must not be overlooked. He noted that there is a group recognition that environmental degradation can have economic and social repercussions, leading to political instability and even threatening peace and that throughout history nations and peoples have been drawn into conflicts over natural resources such as Land, Minerals, Forests and Water.

In accordance with the Articles of Association of SACEP, Honourable Fateh Mohamed Tarin, Minister for Light and Foodstuff Industries, Government of the Republic of Afghanistan was elected Chairman.

Under Institutional and Financial matters, the Governing Council approved the Rules and Regulations for the SACEP Secretariat and also agreed on a new formula for Country Contributions which would ensure the viability of SACEP. The meeting also approved in principle the establishment of a Fund for financing projects and programmes of SACEP on the basis of voluntary contributions by member countries and other donors.



FROM L-R

MR P.N. DIAS ABIEYEGUNAWARDENE, CONSULTANT, SACEP; MR M.J. KAZEM, DIRECTOR, SACEP; HON F.M. TARIN, MINISTER OF LIGHT & FOODSTUFF INDUSTRIES, REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN & CHAIRMAN GC IV; SHRI R.V. WARJRI, FIRST SECRETARY, INDIAN HIGH COMMISSION IN SRI LANKA & RAPPORTEUR.

Under Programme Matters, the Governing Council requested United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), through the SACEP Secretariat to prepare an inter-country Environmental Education Project for South Asia.

In the light of current developments in the field of environment, the Governing Council also approved the Terms of Reference for a Panel of Experts from within the region to review SACEP's current projects and programmes and to formulate a Plan of Action for the next five years.

The Governing Council also authorised the Director of SACEP to enter into consultations with the Secretary-General of SAARC regarding the role SACEP could play as a specialised agency in Environmental matters so as to avoid duplication of work of the two organisations.

The Meeting endorsed the appointment of Mr Shamsul Hoque, nominated by the Government of Bangladesh, as the new Director. The Governing Council also placed on record their deep appreciation to the outgoing Director Mr M.J. Kazem for the able manner in which he executed his duties under very difficult financial constraints.



A SECTION OF PARTICIPANTS AT THE GC IV MEETING

EXTRACT FROM THE STATEMENT MADE BY THE LEADER OF THE SRI LANKA DELEGATION, HON D.B. WIJETUNGA, MINISTER OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH AND MINISTER OF FOOD, SRI LANKA, AT THE SACEP GC IV MEETING.

All of us are now well aware that the only place where human life can exist in its natural form is on the surface of the planet Earth. If we do not nurture the environmental patrimony which we have inherited, we will be the last generation to enjoy it.

SOUTH ASIAN SEAS PROGRAMME

The South Asian Seas Regional Programme, the 11th of a Global Programme launched by UNEP has now entered a crucial phase, where the member countries, who are a party to this activity have to decide on the specifics of operation. A Meeting to discuss the above was convened by UNEP, when the Member Country Focal Points met in December 1987 in Bangkok to discuss initially the environmental problems of the South Asian Seas Region, the progress made in the implementation of the six recommended priority activities, to review the Draft Action Plan and also to discuss the Institutional and Financial Arrangements required for the implementation of the Action Plan.

On the topic of Environmental Problems in the South Asian Seas Region, the final report prepared on the basis of the five country reports was finalised. The conference Secretariat also made available to the participants the Final Draft of the Regional Report on the State of the Marine Environment in the South Asian Seas Region prepared by a Task Team. This is a contribution to a global scientific review on the state of the marine environment sponsored by UNEP through GESAMP. The meeting was also informed of the Establishment of a Task Team to Study the Implications of Expected Climatic Changes in the South Asian Seas Region. This activity will be conducted jointly by IOC and UNEP.

The priority programmes formulated at the Meeting of Experts have shown considerable progress. Two projects namely the Development of a System of Protected Areas in the South Asian Seas Region and the Development of an Operational Regional Contingency Plan for Responding to Marine Pollution Emergencies for the South Asia Region have been approved by UNEP and are in the process of being implemented. The other four projects the Coastal Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for Pakistan, Assessment of Levels and Effects of Marine Pollution in the South Asian Seas Region Phase 1, Survey of Land Based Sources of Marine Pollution and Formulation of Guidelines and Proposals for Environmentally Sound Waste Management Technologies and Policies and Environmental Education and Promotion of Public Awareness for South Asian Countries in Connection with the South Asian Seas Programme are at various stages of finalisation and would be implemented during the course of 1988.

The Meeting also endorsed the recommendation made by the Experts Meeting that SACEP should function as the Secretariat for the SAS Regional Seas Programme.

Following this Meeting, UNEP is expected to convene in early 1988, a Meeting of Legal Experts to review the Draft Convention and the Protocols for the Protection and Management of the South Asian Seas Region and also a Meeting of Plenipotentiaries towards the end of 1988, to formally adopt the Action Plan.

" We may be brothers after all, we shall see. One thing we know, which the white man may one day discover - our God is the same God. You may think now that you own Him as you wish to own the land; but you cannot. He is the God of Man. "

Red Indian Chief Seattle
1854

ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION

Following the successful completion of Phase 1 of this project which culminated with a Workshop on Environmental Legislation for SACEP Member Countries in January 1987, the SACEP Secretariat submitted its terminal report to UNDP.

The report recommended that since a sound basis has been laid in this region for effective Environmental Legislation, UNDP should, as a second phase of this project assist SACEP member countries to :

- a) Provide in-service training to national personnel so that they become competent to keep environmental laws up dated.
- b) Give advice on the content of the curricula in law schools for the integration of environmental law at all levels of legal education.
- c) Create awareness among the legal profession and other interested groups on the importance of up-to-date environmental legislation.
- d) Give advice on the enforcement of the provisions of environmental laws.

The SACEP Secretariat is now awaiting a response from UNDP to the above request.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

SACEP has been in close communication with UNESCO and discussions in the recent past indicate a strong possibility that the long felt need for a Co-ordinated Environmental Education Programme for South Asia would be a reality in the near future.

The recently concluded Governing Council Meeting of SACEP has requested UNESCO, through the SACEP Secretariat, to prepare an inter-country Environmental Education Project for South Asia and to submit to UNDP or any other International Organisation for funding and for SACEP to execute this project in association with UNESCO.

This decision has been duly communicated to UNESCO and the outcome of these negotiations is eagerly awaited by the SACEP Secretariat and all the Member countries of SACEP.

CONSERVATION OF CORALS, MANGROVES & ISLAND ECOSYSTEMS

Under this subject area, the SACEP Secretariat is at present examining the feasibility of conducting a Training Course on Coastal Resource Management Planning in association with ESCAP.

The broad objectives of the course will be to provide the participants from the five Marine Member States of SACEP, a conceptual understanding of the coastal environment, coastal management and planning techniques and through workshop participation a practical experience in assessing and planning of Coastal Zone Protected Areas.

The course would also provide a basic understanding of, and experience in the preparation of Coastal Resource Management Plans and possibly a comparison of Coastal Zone Management Plans now in operation.

The duration of the workshop would be 10 working days and is tentatively scheduled for November 1988.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT & COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS

The final report of the "Senior Level Expert Workshop to Evaluate the Benefits and Constraints of the Environmental Impact Assessment Process in SACEP Countries," has been published by UNEP and has been made available to all SACEP Member Countries by the SACEP Secretariat.

As envisaged, the Secretariat is confident that the recommendations of this Workshop would be taken up by the respective Member States and also that funding for the follow-up action would be available from donor agencies and funding institutions.

TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF RENEWABLE & REUSABLE RESOURCES

The three Pilot Projects formulated by ESCAP's Regional Centre for Technology Transfer, presently known as the Asia and Pacific Centre of Transfer of Technology (APCTT) was submitted by the SACEP Secretariat to UNIDO for possible funding.

The SACEP Secretariat is pleased to announce that the response from UNIDO has been most encouraging and negotiations are on at the moment with the respective Member Governments and UNIDO for early finalisation and implementation of these Project Proposals.

On the subject of identifying common areas of interest in the areas of pollution control, industrial safety, energy recovery and conservation, UNIDO submitted a project proposal which the SACEP Secretariat studied and modified to fall in line with its standard project proposals.

This project proposal is now with UNIDO and its envisaged that during the course of 1988 this project would be operational.

ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARING HOUSE SERVICE PROJECT

This project proposal which was approved at the First Governing Council Meeting of SACEP has been submitted to the Asian Development Bank for funding. The initial request by the Asian Development Bank for letters of approval from the Member Countries of SACEP has been met and the SACEP Secretariat is confident that this long felt need for the region would be fulfilled in the near future.

" Ignorance is one of the most important causes of environmental impoverishment. With an adequate system of information we can learn not only not to repeat the mistakes of others but also to benefit from another's achievements. "

Mostafa Kamal Tolba