



EDITORIAL

Man's fingerprint is found everywhere in the oceans. Chemical contamination and litter can be observed from the poles to the tropics and from beaches to abyssal depths. However conditions in the marine environment vary widely. The open sea is relatively clean. Low levels of lead, synthetic organic compounds and artificial radionuclides, though widely detectable, are biologically insignificant. Oil slicks and litter are common along the sea lanes but presently are of minor consequence to communities of organisms living in open-ocean waters.

The coastal area contains diverse and productive habitats important for human settlements, development and local subsistence. More than half the world's population lives within 60 km of the shoreline and this could rise to three quarters by the year 2020.

Many of the world's poor crowd the coastal areas. Coastal resources are vital for many local communities and indigenous people. The Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is also an important marine area where States manage the development and conservation of natural resources for the benefit of their people. For small island States or Countries, these are the areas most available for development activities.

In contrast to the open sea, the margins of the sea are affected by man almost everywhere and encroachment on coastal areas continues worldwide. Habitats are being lost irretrievably to the construction of harbours and industrial installations, to the development of tourist facilities and mariculture and to the growth of settlements and cities.

The growing exploitation of the coast is a reflection of population increase, accelerating urbanisation, greater affluence and faster transport, trends that will continue throughout the world. The controlling of coastal development and protecting habitats will require changes in planning both inland and on the coast, often involving painful social and political choices.

A wide range of activities on land contributes to the release of contaminants to the sea either directly or carried by rivers and the atmosphere, while sea-borne activities make a minor addition. Only a small part of those contaminants has spread beyond the limits of

the continental shelf. The bulk remains in coastal waters and, in places, particularly in poorly flushed areas, has built up to significant levels.

Two major sources of contaminants from land are sewage disposal and agricultural run-off from fertiliser-treated fields and from intensive stock raising. Microbial contamination from sewage causes many human diseases, including cholera and hepatitis A. Microbial contamination is also responsible for widespread outbreaks of gastrointestinal diseases at ill-protected and crowded beaches and is a suspected cause of respiratory, ear and skin infections among bathers. The haphazard disposal of plastic material on land is littering the beaches seriously damaging marine wildlife, particularly sea mammals, diving birds and reptiles.

While attention is focused mainly on contaminants that are clearly detectable in the sea, there is concern that very low concentrations of toxic substances may produce effects at the sublethal level that could build up over long periods with significant damage to ecosystems.

Some of adverse impacts of land-based activities on the marine environment are that the coastal nursery grounds and shallow waters are being increasingly degraded and marine resources, both wild and farmed, could eventually be damaged on a global scale. In addition, exploitation of living marine resources may degrade the environment by damaging habitats and altering food webs, while mariculture, which is rapidly expanding, generates its own local pollution and may upset the ecological balance by the introduction of exotic species and diseases.

A number of international agreements now supplement national regulations aimed at protecting the seas. They concern mainly pollution from sea-borne sources and have played a role in reducing ocean pollution, particularly by oil residues. However, much remains to be done to control land-based sources, the main contributors to contamination of the sea.

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COUNTRY NEWS

BANGLADESH

FERTILISER SHIPPED BACK

Bangladesh has compelled the US-based Gaston Copper Recycling Inc, which had shipped 6,300 tons of fertiliser mixed with heavy toxic metals to the country in 1991 to take it all back. The fertiliser scandal had cast a shadow over Bangladesh, when the Bangladesh Agricultural Department Corporation imported the consignment way back in 1991. By the time contamination was confirmed, some of the fertiliser had already been in used in rice fields. As pressure mounted from environmental groups, the Bangladesh Government suspended distribution of the toxic fertiliser and filed a US \$ 11,250,000 suit on the US firm for damages.

FLOOD ACTION PLAN CRITICISED

An international panel of engineers and environmentalists, set up to oversee Bangladesh's Flood Action Plan, has criticised the draft "final report" on the plan. The report says the total bill for the 162 projects will be US \$ 7 billion against the US \$ 1 billion recommendation of donors, according to the *New Scientist* (August 6 1994).

Experts said that the plan, a final version of which is to go to potential donors by year end, is over-ambitious and overlooks adverse environmental effects such as damage to the river fisheries.

INDIA

SIBERIAN SETBACK

The multi-nation effort to save the near-extinct Siberian crane has received a setback with the death of one of a pair at the Keoladeo Sanctuary in Bharatpur, Rajasthan. *Little* one of the 2 cranes, died in July following an attack by a bird of another species.

Little and *Bugle* were the first-ever artificially hatched and bred crane chicks. It was hoped that the pair would mix with the flock of Siberian cranes, known to migrate to the sanctuary every winter from Russia.

The number of the migratory birds has been declining every year and the induction of the artificially-born variety was seen as one way to add to it. The sanctuary authorities claim that they are discussing plans to provide better protection to *Bugle*, including confining it to a special enclosure until the siberian cranes come back next year.

INDIA USES MICROBES AND EARTHWORMS TO SOLVE REFUSE PROBLEMS

Microbes and earthworms could be the new stars for the Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) faced with the problem of disposing of 500 tonnes of garbage generated daily in Bombay, India's commercial capital. The BMC has turned to this biotechnology system of refuse treatment and disposal because more than half a dozen of refuse dumps of the city are reaching their full capacity within 2 - 3 years time.

An agrochemical firm - Excel Industries in India has come up with a solution that uses hungry microbes to convert part of the rubbish into manure. The firm has just set up a plant at Bhopal, capital of the State of Madhya Pradesh in Central India. Nine more cities in the State will soon follow the process. Each plant costs around 10 million rupees (US \$ 32,000). Plants will also be set up in other cities like Bangalore and Delhi.

An Excel Pilot Plant that started operations in Bombay in late 1992 converts currently 500 tonnes of garbage into fertiliser each day. This fertiliser is sold to farmers at the rate of two rupees a kg. The Excel system has the advantage that the garbage need not be sorted before processing. The bacterial activity generates enough heat to eliminate any

irritating smells and drive away insects or rodents. Aided by 23,000 workers, the plant is operated at an annual budget of 1.3 billion rupees.

Refuse collected at 6,000 different sites in Bombay is trucked daily to six major dumping grounds by a fleet of 500 lorries. At the Excel Plant, located near a similar but smaller site, garbage is sprayed with a solution containing microbes and allowed to decompose for 45 days, by which time, it turns into manure. After the fertiliser has been passed through a series of mechanical and rotary sieves to separate inorganic matter like glass, plastic and metals, it is packed in 50 kg bags.

Another option of refuse disposal in India is a technique of converting the garbage - nearly 60 percent of its organic matter - into methane gas, which can then be used for cooking, heating and generating electricity. Currently, there are more than 70,000 biogas plants in India producing Methane gas.

The research team of the Chemical Engineering Department at the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay is using earthworms to convert garbage into compost in one of the Bombay Municipal Corporation's largest dumping ground where the earthworms eat their way through about 300 tonnes of garbage daily. According to an estimate, farmers all over the world are currently using fertiliser produced by earthworms on 15,000 hectares of land.

PRIVATE SECTOR GIVES URBAN RUBBISH A NEW LOOK

Government involvement in urban waste management in India is limited and includes sharing the subsidy component for low cost sanitation for the economically weaker sections, imposing a 20 % duty on garbage import and setting up of sewage boards. This woefully inadequate effort is supplemented by the private sector, which recycles a major portion of urban wastes.

The biggest recycling programme in Delhi is conducted by Development Alternative (DA), a voluntary organisation that recycles 200 kg of waste everyday. DA employs women to make products for automobile filter manufacturers, printers and suppliers of coasters out of waste that they collect from embassies, associations and educational institutions.

Delhi's Jan Sewa Ashram conducts environment education programmes and runs a paper recycling unit. It also offers consultancy services to set up units to manufacture handmade paper and helps market products through its outlet, *Environmentally Appropriate Recycling Technology for Humanity*. The ashram is now setting up a recycling factory in Parwanoo in Himachal Pradesh.

The Tamil Nadu Newsprint and Papers Ltd converts bagasse - a waste product of the sugar industry - into newsprint and writing paper, thus helping to conserve forests while aiding waste management.

The Indian Sugar and General Engineering Corp in Yamunanagar in Haryana is one of the largest companies manufacturing solid fuel briquetting plants for the conversion of agricultural wastes into briquettes for fuel.

Daurala Sugar Works in Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh has set up a plant for the production of methane gas from effluents discharged by their factory, reducing toxicity of the effluents as well as producing energy.

Tata Steel and some others have set up plants that recycle slag - a waste product of the steel industry - for use as raw material in the manufacture of cement.

Among the Government enterprises, the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) provides technical and financial assistance for setting up projects in the fields of bio-energy, methane recovery from distillery and industrial effluents, and manufacture of solid fuels from municipal and agricultural wastes.

IREDA has started a series of entrepreneurship development programmes to motivate potential entrepreneurs to undertake ventures in methane gas recovery. It arranges technical consultancy services and provides loans at concessional rates.

The Khadi and Village Industries Commission Ltd collects raw materials from government organisations and the private sector and converts it into paper. It helps conserve forest resources by not using wood pulp in the recycling process.

MALDIVES

FISHING PROBLEM

Fisher folk in the Maldives are worried that a recent government decision to allow foreign vessels to operate 120.68 km from the country's shoreline will rob them of their livelihood, as hi-tech ships capable of sinking thousands of fishing lines into the ocean at one time will eat up the fish stock. According to Inter Press Service, about 25 foreign vessels have already begun working off the Maldives coast, one of which is reportedly using 2,500 lines simultaneously.

GARBAGE FROM TOURISM

Tourism is dealing a body blow to the Maldivian Government's waste management, as it leads to piling up of garbage every year. LTU, a German airline, has offered help in an innovative way. As passengers arrive in the Maldives, it issues them 30 litre garbage bags. The waste that the tourists generate while in the country is handed back to LTU before departure and is then flown to Germany for recycling and disposal.

NEPAL

POLLUTION

The Nepali Government has finally admitted that the state run Himal cement

factory in Kathmandu is a major polluter. The factory will now be fitted with pulse jet filters and filter bags to trap the huge quantities of dust that it emits. Once this equipment is in place, emission from the factory's chimney and crusher will be reduced from 3 tons daily to just 60 kg. Controlling this emission is expected to save the factory approximately 16,000 tons of cement every year.

Germany, which had provided a generous US \$ 10.54 million for a study of the factory's pollution levels, is being tapped for further grants to install the equipment.

PROSPECTS OF CLOSURE

Kulekhani Dam, Nepal's only high dam hydroelectricity project, faces the prospect of closure in less than seven years if the present high level of sedimentation continue. The problem came to light when the country's Soil Conservation Department published a sedimentation survey of the Kulekhani reservoir earlier this year.

The survey showed that sedimentation following flash floods in July last year had led to a reduction of 7.71 million cubic metres in the gross capacity of the reservoir. The Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) is now trying to identify possible sites for check dams to trap silt.

PAKISTAN

BAN ON POLYTHENE

Quetta in Pakistan has set a precedent by completely prohibiting the sale, purchase and use of polythene bags in the city, as of 1st May 1994. According to *Pano Report*, manufacturers have received directives to wind up business. If the measures prove successful, it will strengthen the case of environmental NGOs who are pushing for similar action in other cities across the world.

The Sindh Province too, has followed the example of Quetta and a ban was imposed, effective 26 August 1994.

HIGH BLOOD LEAD LEVEL

According to a study conducted by World Health Organisation/United Nations Environment Programme, Karachi has the highest blood lead level among 20 of the largest cities in the world. The study found blood lead levels to be 0.332 mg/l in Karachi school children, 0.392 mg/l among mentally retarded children and adults, and 0.466mg/l among traffic police persons. In comparison, the highest acceptable limit in the European Community is 0.2 mg/l.

The level of lead in petrol in the city at 0.0023mg/l, is ten times higher than the prescribed international standard. The city has not introduced lead-free petrol - a measure that reduced mean blood lead levels in the US and resulted in the reduction of 50,000 predicted deaths over a period of ten years.

ON THE VERGE OF EXTINCTION

Once home to a rich variety of migratory birds from Russia, Siberia and Central Asia, the Gamaghar Lake near Lahore, Pakistan, has been driven to the verge of extinction by an ill-planned irrigation system.

Inadequate drainage systems has led to high levels of waterlogging and salinity in nearby agricultural areas. To overcome this problem, Pakistan's Water and Power Development Authority undertook to lower the groundwater table by draining the waterlogged land. In the process, however, the Gamaghar Lake was also drained, causing the wetland to shrink.

POLLUTION IN KARACHI FISH HARBOUR

Pollution in the Karachi fish harbour has reached mind boggling proportions, reports *The Dawn*. Throughout the year, the Lyari river carries wastes from the industries in the Sindh Industrial Estate to the harbour. The effluents comprise wastes from pharmaceutical, textile, chemical, tanning and petrochemical industries. After remaining in the harbour for some time, the effluents enter the sea through the Manora Channel, wrecking havoc on the marine resources of the country.

SRI LANKA

WATER WASTAGE

About 170 million litre of water are wasted every day in Sri Lanka's capital, Colombo. The National Water Supply and Drainage Board supplies 236.39 million litres of water every day to Colombo and 263.67 million litres to the suburbs. The bulk of this is wasted as residents of poor neighborhoods, shanties, tenement gardens and slum dwellers do not feel any responsibility towards conserving water, which is provided free to them. Water is wasted through leaks in pipelines, compounded by consumers failing to turn off taps. In addition, water is pilfered through illegal connections.

PRAWN PROBLEM

The booming prawn industry in Sri Lanka has worried environmentalists. They fear that mangroves will be destroyed to make way for prawn farms and that prime land will be encroached upon, resulting in the destruction of fish breeding grounds and damaging biodiversity. Besides, the waste from the enterprises will add to the pollution.

The focus of controversy is Chilaw Lake in the northwestern province, where prawn farmers have set up many ponds of about 12 ha each, according to a *Panos Report*. These ponds yield about 50,000 prawns per ha, which sell for approximately US \$ 8.50 each in the US and Japan.

SACEP NEWS

SACEP - NORAD CO-OPERATION

A new chapter in the history of South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) was opened when they, for the very first time, entered into collaboration with a Bilateral Donor Agency, namely Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation (NORAD) for the implementation of two of the Priority Projects identified under SACEP's Strategy and Programme Phase I for 1992 - 1996 (SSP-I) and approved by SACEP's Fifth Governing Council Meeting held in September 1992.

The two Projects are:

- 1) **Assessment of Faunal Biodiversity in the Countries of South Asia**
- 2) **Co-operation in Environmental Training: A Proposal for Capacity Building in the South Asian Region.**

The Short Term objectives of the Project on the **Assessment of Faunal Biodiversity in the Countries of South Asia** are to train Zoologists/Biologists of SACEP Countries in the field of Systematics, Taxonomy and Ecology; to train Scientists of SACEP Countries in Environmental Impact Assessment and to facilitate Exchange of Data on Biodiversity as the basis for Recommending Appropriate Schemes and Measures to remedy loss of Biodiversity due to man's activity.

The Long Term objective of the project is to Assist in the Development of a Definitive South Asian Biodiversity Action Plan and to provide Countries in the SACEP Region with an Environmentally Sound Management Plan, based on Systematics and Taxonomy, Ecology, Environmental Impact Assessment Studies and to



Mr Per Prestgard, Resident Head of Mission, Royal Norwegian Embassy and Mr Prasantha Dias Abeyegunawardene, Programme Officer, South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme exchanging the Letter of Agreement on the Proposed SACEP - NORAD Co-operation. Present on the occasion were Mr Arild Skåra, Assistant Resident Representative / First Secretary, Royal Norwegian Embassy and Mr J. S. Mukul, Chairman, Consultative Committee of SACEP and First Secretary, Indian High Commission in Sri Lanka.

identify Acceptable Biodiversity Levels such as determined on the basis of Scientific, Institutional, Social and Economic Factors.

The short term objectives of the Project on Co-operation in Environmental Training: A Proposal for Capacity Building in the South Asia to assess initially on a Country Basis and later for the Region, the Training requirements on a Priority Basis and to identify existing Training Programmes and Opportunities in Environment and Development related fields in the Region.

The Long Term objective is to assist in the Development of a Definitive Plan of Action for the SACEP Region in respect of meeting the Training Needs on a National and Regional Basis.

The total value of the two projects is US \$ 412,500 and the Letter of Agreement was signed on 8th December 1994 at the Royal Norwegian Embassy.

WORKSHOP ON ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION FOR COUNTRIES IN SOUTH ASIA

Following discussions the SACEP Secretariat had with UNEP's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific and UNEP's Environmental Law Institutions Programme Activity Centre, Nairobi, UNEP's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) has made available to SACEP a sum of US \$ 30,000 (US Dollars Thirty Thousand) to be applied for a **Training Programme in Environmental Law for Countries for South Asia** to be convened in October/November 1995. A Project Document for the conduct of this activity has been signed by both UNEP and SACEP. The Programme is to be designed and conducted in collaboration with UNEP's Environmental Law & Institutions Programme Activity Centre.

The workshop will focus on the efficacy of the existing national environmental

legislation and institutional framework to meet the new challenges of sustainable development, with special reference to general/framework environmental laws and the relevant institutions.

The Outputs of the Workshop are as follows:

- a. *Identification of problems encountered in the implementation of national framework legislation and their causes, and formulation of country-specific recommendations, for revised framework legislation that promote sustainable development, that are more responsive to national and/or public needs and circumstances, and conducive to more effective implementation.*
- b. *Identification of follow-up programmes and financial and human resources required for taking action at national level for the development and implementation of the revised framework legislation.*
- c. *Country specific recommendations (to be prepared by each participant as a concrete outcome of the Workshop) for the revision/restructuring of existing legislation to enhance implementability and meet the new challenges of environmentally sound and sustainable development.*

**GEOGRAPHIC
INFORMATION SYSTEMS/
SACEP
ENVIRONMENTAL
NATURAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTRE
(SENRIC)**

**Training Programme on GIS Technology
for Natural Resources Management
SENRIC Project**

The SENRIC Project has successfully completed its 1st year of operations. During This Period, the Project has established a fully operational PC level GIS lab, offered training courses for departments of various disciplines to ensure effective use of the GIS technology in decision making.



A Section of the Invitees at the Certificate Award Ceremony



L-R. Mr. V. P. Jauhari, Director SACEP Mr. J. S. Mukul, Chairman, SACEP Consultative Committee and First Secretary Indian High Commission, Dr D Nesiah Secretary Ministry of Transport, Environment and Women's Affairs, Mr P K Kotta Project Manager SENRIC

IA Certificate Presentation Ceremony was held on the 16 November, 1994 for the first two batches of the trainees. Dr. D. Nesiah, Secretary, ministry of Transport, Environment and Women's Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka as the Chief Guest and Mr. J.S. Mukul, Chairman, SACEP Consultative Committee and First Secretary, Indian High Commission in Sri Lanka Chaired the Session.

Establishment of EIS units for Maldives and Sri Lanka

Following the Training, the SENRIC project has signed Letter of Agreements with the Governments of Maldives and Sri Lanka through the Ministries of Environment to set up Environmental Information System (EIS) Units with GIS capabilities. The unit houses necessary software and hardware for the

development of an Environmental Database at a proper scale to assist the Ministry in informed decision making and the elaborative efforts being put in for a regularised State of Environmental reporting. The unit for Maldives will be set up during the last week of January 1995, in the Computer Center of the ministry. The SENRIC Project Manager and the Director of SACEP had met the concerned officials of the Ministry of Planning, Human Resources and Environment, in Male to finalize the set up. Through the Letter of Agreement, the EIS unit for Sri Lanka would be based at the Natural Resources Management (NRM) Division of the Central Environmental Authority (CEA). Setup of this unit will be complete, soon after the space for the computer room has been allocated.

Following the proper functioning of these units, necessary steps will be carried out to strengthen the trained Government Departments with this technology.



Mr Lalith Chandrapala Department of Meteorology Making a Presentation at the Award Ceremony



L-R. Mr Prasantha Dias Abeyegunawardene, Programme Officer, SACEP, Mr V. P. Jauhari, Director, SACEP, Hon Mr Reggie Ranatunga, Deputy Minister for Transport, Environment & Women's Affairs, Government of Sri Lanka, Mr J. S. Mukul, Chairman, SACEP Consultative Committee and First Secretary Indian High Commission Mr Ian Dight, Programme Officer, OCA/PAC, UNEP, Nairobi J. S. & Mr Robert England, Resident Representative, UNDP, Sri Lanka.

THIRD MEETING OF NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ACTION PLAN FOR THE PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SOUTH ASIAN SEAS REGION

The Executive Director of UNEP, in co-operation with SACEP, convened a Third Meeting of National Focal Points on the Development of an Action Plan for the Protection and Management of the South Asian Seas Region in order to review the Draft Action Plan for the Protection and Management of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the South Asian Seas region, including the proposed text for inclusion in the Draft Action Plan.

The following organisations were also invited to participate at this Meeting: ADB, ESCAP, FAO, IMO, IOC, IUCN, SACEP, UNDP UNESCO, UNIDO, World Bank, WHO and WMO. The Meeting was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, 23 - 25 November 1994.

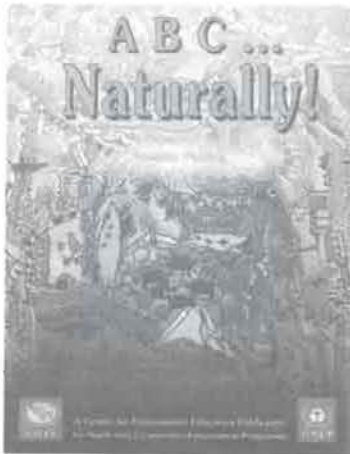
The Meeting was inaugurated by **Hon Mr Reggie Ranatunga, Deputy Minister for Transport, Environment and Women's Affairs, Government of Sri**

includes, as annexes, the priority programme areas identified at the ESCAP/UNEP/SACEP Intergovernmental Meeting held in May 1994, namely, *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*. The fourth priority area identified was *Land Based Sources of Marine Pollution*. These annexes will form an integral part of the Action Plan.

The Meeting, taking into consideration the fact that the member countries were firmly committed towards finalisation of the South Asian Seas Programme, requested the Executive Director of UNEP to take the necessary steps to convene, as soon as possible, a Meeting of Plenipotentiaries to formally adopt the Action Plan for the South Asian Regional Seas Programme. An offer was made by Representative from India that his Government is willing to host this Meeting which was accepted by the other delegates and UNEP. The Representative of UNEP said that this request would be conveyed to the Executive Director of UNEP and OCA/PAC would work towards convening this Meeting sometime in March 1995.

SACEP RELEASES BOOKS FOR CREATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AMONGST CHILDREN

A presentation of four books published by South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), for creating environmental awareness amongst the school children of South Asia, was made to the **Hon. Mrs Srimani Athulathmudali, Minister of Transport, Environment and Women's Affairs by South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP)** at a simple presentation ceremony at Ministry Office. Associated in the presentation of these books were Mr J.S. Mukul, Chairman, Consultative Committee of SACEP and First Secretary, Indian High Commission in Sri Lanka, Mr Prasantha Dias Abeyegunawardene, Programme Officer, South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme, Ms Marlene Pereira, Administrative Manager, South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme and Mrs N. Mohottala, Director Planning, Ministry of Transport, Environment and Women's Affairs.



South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) in its Strategy and Programme for 1992 -1996 (SSP - I), identified five priority programme areas for initiating projects and programmes. One of these areas pertains to the "Enhancement of Environmental Awareness for the Public in the South Asian Region".

In this context, SACEP with financial assistance from UNEP's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific has published four books covering the topics of **Conservation of Natural Resources, Pollution, Waste Reduction & Recycling and Forests and its Values.** The titles of the books are *ABC ... Naturally!*; *Puzzling Out Pollution*; *Where's Away?* & *Forest Tales*.

These books which have a good blend of visuals and narrative has been written in simple language so that it is easy to understand and is also interesting enough to attract the attention of the youth.

Undertaking this assignment for SACEP was the *Centre for Environment Education, Ahmedabad*, who is SACEP's Subject Area Focal Point for Environment and Education.

300 copies of these books have been made available to the SACEP Focal Points of its Member Governments, namely *Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka*, for distribution amongst the children in the respective countries.

As a follow up to this project, SACEP is planning, with the Focal Points of the member countries, to translate these books into the local languages of that country and to ensure that these books are distributed freely to the children of South Asia.

SOUTH ASIA CONSULTATION ON ENVIRONMENT REPORTING FOR UNEP'S ENVIRONMENT ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME

A Consultation on Environment Reporting with Governments in South Asia Region for UNEP's Environment Assessment Programme was organised by South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) in association with the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and the United Nations Environment Programme, Environment Assessment Programme - Asia Pacific (UNEP/EAP-AP), in Katmandu, Nepal from 3 - 5th October 1994.

The overall objectives of the Meeting was to seek the guidance of high Government representatives from the South Asia Region on the draft policy and strategy of the UNEP Environment Assessment Sub-Programme.

The Meeting was attended by Representatives from the following Member Countries of SACEP viz: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. There was also representatives from the following United Nations Agencies and International Organisations: International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), United Nations Environment Programme, Environment Assessment Programme - Asia Pacific (UNEP/EAP-AP), Bangkok & United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi.

The main items of the Agenda were the Briefing on UNEP's Environment Assessment Programme, Presentation by South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme, Country Presentations and the recommendations from the Meeting on Assessment and Reporting Needs in the Region & the Associated Data Management Needs and Networking for Assessment and Reporting.



Participants attending the South Asia Consultation on Environment Reporting for UNDP'S Environment Assessment Programme in Kathmandu

On the Briefing on UNEP's Environment Assessment Programme, Mr Dan van R. Claasen, Co-ordinator - Environment Assessment Programme, UNEP, Nairobi made a presentation on Programme, History and the New Directions of UNEP's Environment Assessment Programme (EAP). It was mentioned that the role of UNEP is to assist the countries, sub-regional programmes and the sectoral agencies in international consensus building, supporting national environmental management and the provision of information for decision making through enhanced access to environmental information and developing the capacity to utilise it. The results UNEP's expects are better understanding of the issues, more relevant and efficient approaches, improvement of access and increased capacity leading to better environmental management.

Mr Surendra Shrestha, Regional Co-ordinator of the UNEP's Environment Assessment Programme for Asia Pacific Region, made presentations with examples on information technologies, UNEP/EAP-AP, Development & Capacity Building activities and outline of proposed discussion issues.

Mr V.P. Jauhari, Director SACEP making the presentation on behalf of South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme explained the conceptual framework of the report while elaborating the goals and objectives. The need for database, its format, standardisation and institutional mechanism was also highlighted. It was pointed out that important aspects of the report should cover issues at national and regional level. Structure of the report and format of presentation need to be designed in such a way that it serves the purpose of all the user groups and also contains the summary of the main report for high level policy makers.

The participants were briefed on the need for careful consideration of the two documents circulated by the SACEP Secretariat and UNEP/EAP-AP. They were also requested to give their suggestions and also bring out their needs in terms of capacity building, institutional development and funding mechanisms. It was emphasised that the present exercise is to evolve a permanent process of State of Environment Reporting which would also utilise the RENRIC Network of UNEP.

Following the Country Presentations, the Meeting reviewed the Document "*Development of an Environmental Information Database for State of the Environment Reporting*" prepared by UNEP/EAP-AP, Bangkok.

It was agreed that UNEP/EAP-AP would provide the Member Countries the revised version of this document within two weeks. The Member Countries were however advised that they initiate activities for the collection of information for completing the Database even prior to receiving the revised version.

The participating countries agreed that they would complete all activities in respect of compiling the National State of Environment Database by February 1995. It was also agreed that the South Asia Forum for State of Environment Consultation would meet in the July/August 1995 either in Thimphu, Royal Government of Bhutan or in Sri Lanka. The SACEP Secretariat was requested make arrangements for conducting this Meeting and for funding which will be arranged by UNEP/EAP-AP.

MEETING OF NATIONAL CONSULTANTS ON STATE OF ENVIRONMENT REPORT FOR SOUTH ASIA 1995

The Meeting of National Consultants on State of Environment Report for South Asia 1995 was organised by South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) in association with the United Nations Environment Programme/Environment Assessment Programme - Asia Pacific (UNEP/EAP-AP), in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 29th - 30th November 1994.

The main objective of the Meeting was to review and make recommendations to revise the Draft Regional Report on State of Environment Report for South Asia 1995.

The Meeting was attended by Representatives from the following Member Countries of SACEP viz: India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Representatives from the following United Nations Agencies and International Organisations also participated: International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) & United Nations Environment Programme / Environment Assessment Programme for Asia and the Pacific (UNEP/EAP-AP), Bangkok.

In his opening address, Mr. V.P. Jauhari, Director, SACEP welcomed the participants to this Meeting and thanked UNEP Environment Assessment Programme, Bangkok for their assistance to the SACEP region in conducting this most important exercise of preparing the State of Environment Report for South Asia 1995.

Mr Surendra Shrestha, Director/Regional Co-ordinator of the UNEP's Environment Assessment Programme for Asia Pacific Region in his opening statement briefed the Meeting on the Environment Assessment Programme (EAP) of UNEP

with components of Capacity Building, Data Management and Assessment and Reporting. He went on to add that the expectations of the Sub-Regional State of Environment includes addressing the following:

* *What are major issues of concern to Governments of South Asia?*

* *What are the causes and consequences of the above major issues of concern?*

* *Given the present trends, what are the prospects of addressing the issues at a policy level collectively at the Sub-Regional level.*

* *What are the needs of SACEP and National Agencies to address Assessment and Reporting on a regular basis?*

It was further stated that UNEP/EAP will continue to compliment SACEP's efforts in addressing the needs of National Agencies for regular environment assessment and reporting.

The Revision of State of the Environment Report for South Asia 1995 is currently in progress and is due to be presented at South Asia Forum for State of Environment Consultation scheduled to be held in July/August 1995.

GENERAL

87 COUNTRIES SIGN DESERTIFICATION CONVENTION

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification was signed by 87 government representatives on 14 - 15 October 1994 in Paris, France. After signing this legal agreement to curb the degradation of arid lands, governments announced their plans for transforming the accord into action. Various governments pledged to establish National Action Committees to interact with grassroot organisations.

international agencies and donor governments. Countries currently suffering from desertification vowed to enhance their government programmes.

The financial assistance needed to implement the accord was a major topic of discussion at the final negotiations on the convention this past June. In the light of this, OECD countries announced at the signing ceremony that aid packages would be distributed to poor African countries suffering from the severe effects of desertification. Pledges were promised by the US, the European Union, Germany, Canada, Denmark, France and Japan.

WORLD BANK CONFERENCE EXPLORES URBAN ENVIRONMENT

Tackling the challenges of urbanisation was the theme of the Second Annual World Bank Conference on Environmentally Sustainable Development entitled "The Human Face of the Urban Environment" held from 19 - 21 September 1994 in Washington, DC.

The world's major cities are getting bigger, and within the next ten years, half of humanity will live in cities and urban agglomerations. This demographic shift will place an intolerable burden on urban environments and civic facilities. Increasingly, city residents will live in filthy environments that will threaten their health and stunt economic progress and the urban poor will continue to be the hardest hit by this urbanisation boom.

The three day conference brought together 900 environmentalists, practitioners and policy makers from 60 countries, representing donors, governments, NGOs, UN Agencies and Academic Institutions to address the imminent threat of urbanisation.

Given the depth and complexity of urban environmental problems, the Conference featured a host of associated events addressing different issues. These include urban air pollution; protecting people from hazardous wastes; disposal of

municipal, industrial, solid and liquid waste; conserving common resources; water supply; sanitation; the link between health, poverty and environment; regional and city networks; public-private partnerships; and sustainable community development.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has recently released *Partnerships for Sustainable Development*, a publication which focuses on the role of business and industry in achieving sustainable development. With sixteen international case studies drawn from diverse sectors, it provides specific examples of how businesses worldwide have formed alliances with other stakeholders (e.g. industry, government and NGOs) to tackle the problems of environment and development. Sectors highlighted range from agriculture and forestry to manufacturing and finance, in both the North and South. Case studies reflect a multitude of partnership objectives, such as cleaner production, poverty alleviation, conflict resolution, and policy formulation. This publication is to be utilised as a guide for implementing Agenda 21.

UNDP FUNDS PROJECT TO REDUCE TROPICAL DEFORESTATION

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has contributed US \$ 3 million for a worldwide research and development project aimed at reducing tropical deforestation triggered by slash-and-burn agriculture. The project is expected to identify agricultural constraints that result in farmers using the slash-and-burn agriculture. As part of the Project, national institutions are expected to examine alternative land use practices to slash-and-burn activities, taking into consideration socio-economic factors. Local and regional NGOs will act as liaisons between farmers' groups and extension services.

CLIMATE CHANGE IN ASIA RELEASED

Following two years of studies on the effects and implications of climate change in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, a ten volume report titled *Climate Change in Asia*, has been released. Each country report has been prepared by specialists (Scientists, Engineers and Economists) in co-operation with key government agencies in each respective country. The results of these studies were presented to the governments of each of the participating country. The regional initiative emphasises the challenge Asian nations must face to reduce their vulnerability to climate change. The study of the Asia Pacific Region was organised by the Climate Institute and sponsored by the Asian Development Bank, with funding from the Governments of Australia, Japan and Norway.

FORESTS MEETING MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CSD95

The Second Session of the Intergovernmental Working Group on Forests was convened in Ottawa, Canada, from 10 - 14 October 1994, under the co-sponsorship of the governments of Canada and Malaysia. Interests in this process had grown during the intersessional period and 32 governments participated, more than twice as many as had attended the Kuala Lumpur session in April 1994.

The objectives of the meeting were to facilitate dialogue and consolidation of approaches to the sustainable management and development of all types of forests and to prepare a set of opportunities and options for action that would contribute to the work of the CSD and might be considered for adoption at the 1995 session of the CSD (CSD95). The CSD will consider the forest issue as part of the five year thematic review of Agenda 21 at the Intersessional Ad-hoc Open-Ended Working Group on Sectoral

issues, to be held from 27 February - 3 March 1995, and at CSD95.

During the five days of meetings, participants met in two working groups to discuss papers on sustainable forest management, trade and environment, cross-sectoral integration and institutional linkages. The Rapporteur responsible for each of the discussion papers produced a synthesis document, incorporating the key points raised in debate and a set of approaches, options and opportunities for each of the topics.

The options highlighted in the final document presented a range of suggestions for CSD95. These call for the CSD to consider appropriate arrangements and means to foster greater dialogue and co-ordination; the FAO to convene meetings of forest ministers on a regular basis; nations to build on the Model Forest Sites initiative; the CSD to designate an appropriate body to undertake a series of studies; the CSD to expand the guidelines for country reports on forests to include approaches to participation in forest management; and countries to continue the work done in various processes to develop criteria and indicators for the management, conservation and sustainable development.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	VENUE
9 - 20 January 1995	Sixth Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee of the Convention to Combat Desertification	New York, USA
18 January 1995	Forty-eighth Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representative to UNEP	Nairobi, Kenya
27 February to 10 March 1995	Regional INFOTERRA Training for ROAP Region	Bangkok, Thailand
2 - 3 March 1995	Second Subregional Meeting of Regional Environmental & Natural Resources Information Network (RENFIN)	Kathmandu, Nepal
6 - 10 March 1995	Preparatory Meeting of Government-designated Experts on Draft Programme of Action for Protection of the Marine Environment from Land based Activities	Reykjavik, Yugoslavia
22 March 1995	Forty-ninth Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representative to UNEP	Nairobi, Kenya
23 March 1995	Fourth Meeting of National Focal Points on the Development of an Action Plan for the Protection and Management of the South Asian Seas Region	New Delhi, India
24 March 1995	Meeting of Plenipotentiaries on the Development of an Action Plan for the Protection and Management of the South Asian Seas Region	New Delhi, India
27 - 29 March 1995	ESCAP/ADB/UNEP Workshop on Coastal and Marine Environmental Management in the South China Seas	Bangkok, Thailand
27 March to 14 April 1995	Second Global Training Programme in Environmental Law and Policy	Nairobi, Kenya
Second Half April 1995	Fiftieth Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representative to UNEP	Nairobi, Kenya
24 April to 1 May 1995	Fifty-first Session of ESCAP	Bangkok, Thailand
15 - 26 May 1995	Eighteenth Session of the UNEP Governing Council	Nairobi, Kenya

SACEP NEWSLETTER is distributed free of charge to National Environmental Agencies, Non Governmental Organisations, Citizens' Groups and Mass Media. It welcomes news items, short articles, and viewpoints on environmental issues from readers in order to promote environmental awareness in the South Asian Region. The Editor reserves the right to edit and publish manuscripts in accordance with the editorial requirements of the publication.

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