

SACEP NEWS

Newsletter of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme



No.2: Issue:3
December 2003



Continuing the Quest for Sustainable Development **SACEP Looks to the Future...**

Message from the Director General
Mahboob Elahi

International commitment for environmental protection and sustainable development has been reaffirmed through the United Nations' Millennium Declaration and the Plan of Implementation of the WSSD. In this pursuit the vital role of interlinked and complementary co-operative actions at local, national, and regional level has also been emphasised.

Efforts to protect the environment and conserve natural resources are age-old practices interwoven into South Asia's cultural endowments, yet it has not afforded us an elixir to free us from environmental degradation. A closely-knit web of chronic poverty, increasing population and changing lifestyles are depleting the rich natural resources of our countries. National governments have taken up the challenge to overcome this problem and have allocated substantial resources in developing national, sub-national and local environmental institutions, laws, programmes and projects. While these efforts are applauded it is also obvious that much more needs to be done and should also be supported or strengthened by sub-regional initiatives thereby accumulating benefits on a wider scale.

To foster regional co-operation and support national initiatives in environmental protection, the leadership of South Asia instituted SACEP 21 years ago. Up to 2003 many projects and programmes have been carried out with specific objectives of building capacities, increasing awareness and assessing problems (see pg 2-3 for more information). While there have been successes there have also been many shortcomings. The journey is only half finished and we are in the process of moving forward in line with international targets and national priorities for sustainable development.

In this context, a review process was put in motion in 2001 to strengthen SACEP with the assistance of UNEP-ROAP. Mr R Rajamani who was commissioned for this task, has drawn from his extensive experience in the environment sector to formulate SACEP's Strategy and Work Programme in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders. This strategy has been discussed at length at various forums and on November 6, 2003 at the 3rd Special Session of SACEP's Governing Council this was endorsed subject to some amendments (see pg 4). This endorsement has provided SACEP with a revitalised mandate to lead and facilitate regional co-operation to address South Asia's environmental priorities. The National Focal Points are and will remain paramount as the primary drivers and owners of SACEP, and thereby ensuring the link to national level activities.

We need to draw on our proud heritage, rich diversity and collective strength to pave the way for sustainable development both at the national and regional level. In support to what we have within the region we also must create legitimate demands on global systems for support to realise our expressed priorities and shared concerns.

As the Environment is a common asset it offers a perfect ground for building co-operation and forging a positive interaction that defies political and administrative boundaries. We acknowledge the valuable support of our partners including UNEP, NORAD, UN-ESCAP, IMO, GCRMN, ICRAN, and CORDIO. SACEP is keen to strengthen existing partnerships while also building new relationships and we urge you to join with us in this quest.

In this Issue

As SACEP completes 21 years this issue looks back at SACEP's past and towards the future

Quotable quotes	2
From 1983 - 2003: A quick look at our past	2
Looking to the future...	4
Supportive role of SACEP	5
Building partnerships for sustainable development	5
Report of the Asia-Pacific workshop on MEAs	6
Assessing capacity on compliance and enforcement of MEAs	6
Support for chemical management	7
A new approach for chemical management	7
The Rotterdam Convention enters into force	7
A training course on how to deal with oil spills	8
Preparing ahead: Oil spill contingency planning	8
A new strategy for the Regional Seas Programme	9
Briefing on the Convention on Migratory Species	10
A proposal for a collaborative project to protect marine turtles	10
Assessing ecosystem well-being and human well-being - the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment	11
Priority paper on sustainable development	12
What's in a song?	12



Quotable Quotes

"It is for this pioneering effort that I would like to express my sincere congratulations to the political leadership of our South Asian nations. They provided the inspiration, the practical wisdom and guidance for the successful launching of SACEP."

Hon. Mr R. Premadasa – Co-founder of SACEP, and Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, 1983

"We cannot have development today without evaluating the full cost of every project, not just the immediate cost but the long term costs. We cannot leave the long term part of that cost for future generations to pay."

Hon. Shri Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, 1987

"The importance of SACEP is not only in its being the first step towards co-operative actions in the region, but also in the spirit of self-reliance shown by member countries..."

Hon. Sultan Ali Keshmand, Former Prime Minister of Afghanistan, 1988

"We believe, an attack on poverty need not be an assault on our environment."

H.E. Mr. Dago Tshering, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs of Bhutan, 1988

"We must co-operate with each other to arrest and reverse the insidious decline of our environment... It is a daunting challenge which we must face Individually as well as collectively..."

Hon. Mr. Anwar Saifullah Khan, Minister for Environment & Urban Affairs, Pakistan, 1992

"The choice that South Asia, and indeed the world, faces today is a stark one. The options are either inertia or action. One spells doom. The other survival and progress. It will not be a choice a country makes only for itself, or for one generation, one time. But, it is one that will affect all our countries and all our peoples, for all times."

H.E. Mr Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, President of Maldives, 1998

"There is an expressed need for the enhanced and effective role of SACEP in the region for the betterment of the people and our environment."

Hon. Mr P.L. Singh, Minister Population and Environment of Nepal, 2001

From 1983 - 2003: A Quick Look at Our Past

On the initiative of a number of countries in South Asia and the UNEP Regional office for Asia Pacific (UNEP-ROAP), an Inter-Governmental Expert Group Meeting was held in Bangalore, India in March (1980) to discuss the advantages of working co-operatively for the conservation and wise use of natural resources. This meeting culminated in a high-level meeting in February 1981 that established the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) with the motto of "before you look outside for what you need, look inside for what you have". SACEP became a legal entity on 9 February 1982, and up to date Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have ratified the Articles of Association.

The emergence of SACEP marked a new era in the history of South Asia, as for the first time the countries of the region came together to form its own inter-governmental organisation. Co-operation has been the basis, the foundation and the cornerstone of SACEP and its effectiveness and success depend largely on the spirit of working together.

SACEP's programming spans fifteen priority areas identified by the member states and include coastal ecosystems, biodiversity, education, science and technology, law and sustainable development. Project and programme activities focus on supporting governments with environmental conservation and management. Towards this, SACEP in collaboration with various partners have worked to introduce concepts, increase awareness and information, strengthen capacities, and build networks. Over the past 21 years, over 40 such programmes reaching out directly to more than 1000 representatives from ministerial and partner organisations have been carried out. Major outcomes are summarised below.

Hosting Regional Programmes:

Hosting and co-ordinating regional arms of international programmes and activities have been a major contributor in terms of bringing in expertise to improve environmental protection mechanisms in the region.

The South Asian Seas Programme: This falls under the umbrella of UNEP's Regional Seas Programme, and has been a part of SACEP's work since 1983. In 1995, the five maritime member states of SACEP adopted the South Asian Seas Action Plan to take forward activities under this programme. Some of the major achievements are as follows:

- **Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities:** Development of a status report for the countries and the region on protection of the marine environment from land-based activities was done with UNEP-GPA.
- **Oil Spill Contingency Planning:** Country and regional reports on oil spill contingency planning were prepared in collaboration with IMO. This led to the preparation of a MoU for co-operation on responding to oil spill incidences in the region. A series of training sessions reaching over 100 related personnel have been held (see pgs 8-9).

The South Asia Environment and Natural Resources Information Centre (SENRIC): Initiated in 1994, SENRIC facilitates UNEP's early warning and assessment strategy in South Asia. Some of the major outcomes are as follows:

- **Strengthening GIS facilities:** Several training programmes were carried out on information technology for government departments for better data management and more effective decision making.
- **The Malé Declaration on Control and Prevention of Air Pollution and its likely Transboundary Effects for South Asia:** This set in place a major initiative on regional co-operation. Provision of training, equipment and installation of air pollution monitoring stations are taking place. This contributes to increasing the quality, quantity and competency for air pollution monitoring in the region.
- **State of the Environment Reports:** Reports for Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka, and the South Asian Region were produced. Contributions were also made to the South Asian component of the Global Environment Outlook



2 and 3. This project strengthened the data management activities of the National Focal Points of member countries while also adding to the information base of the region.

Coral Reef Related Activities: In 1995 SACEP became the South Asia regional node for International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) activities and since 1999 has hosted the Coral Reef Degradation in the Indian Ocean (CORDIO) Programme's South Asia activities. The International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN) expansion to the South Asian region was presented for endorsement at the Governing Council of SACEP in January 2002. SACEP is fully committed to co-ordinate coral reef related work in the region with partner organisations.

Awareness and Capacity Building Projects

Conservation of Mangroves, Corals and Island Ecosystems: With financial assistance from UNEP/ESCAP, a symposium was held in Dhaka (1983) and based on the recommendations of the meeting; SACEP prepared an Action Plan that was circulated among relevant organisations.

The Year of Trees: Through a resolution unanimously adopted by SACEP's member countries, 1988 was declared the year of trees for South Asia. With UNEP's assistance, a range of activities were carried out in each country including tree planting events and the preparation of a Regional Action Plan.

Environmental Legislation: The SACEP/UNDP Mission in 1982 identified the need to update environmental laws and training of lawyers in drafting environmental legislation. With support from UNDP, country status reports and a regional overview was prepared and presented at a workshop in New Delhi, India (1987). The documents were analysed towards making recommendations to respective governments. Following this, another project to Strengthen Legislative Frameworks for Environment Management was carried out

in partnership with UNEP and NORAD. This was one of SACEP's most successful activities that led to increasing awareness among high level officials in the judiciary and 4 valuable publications.

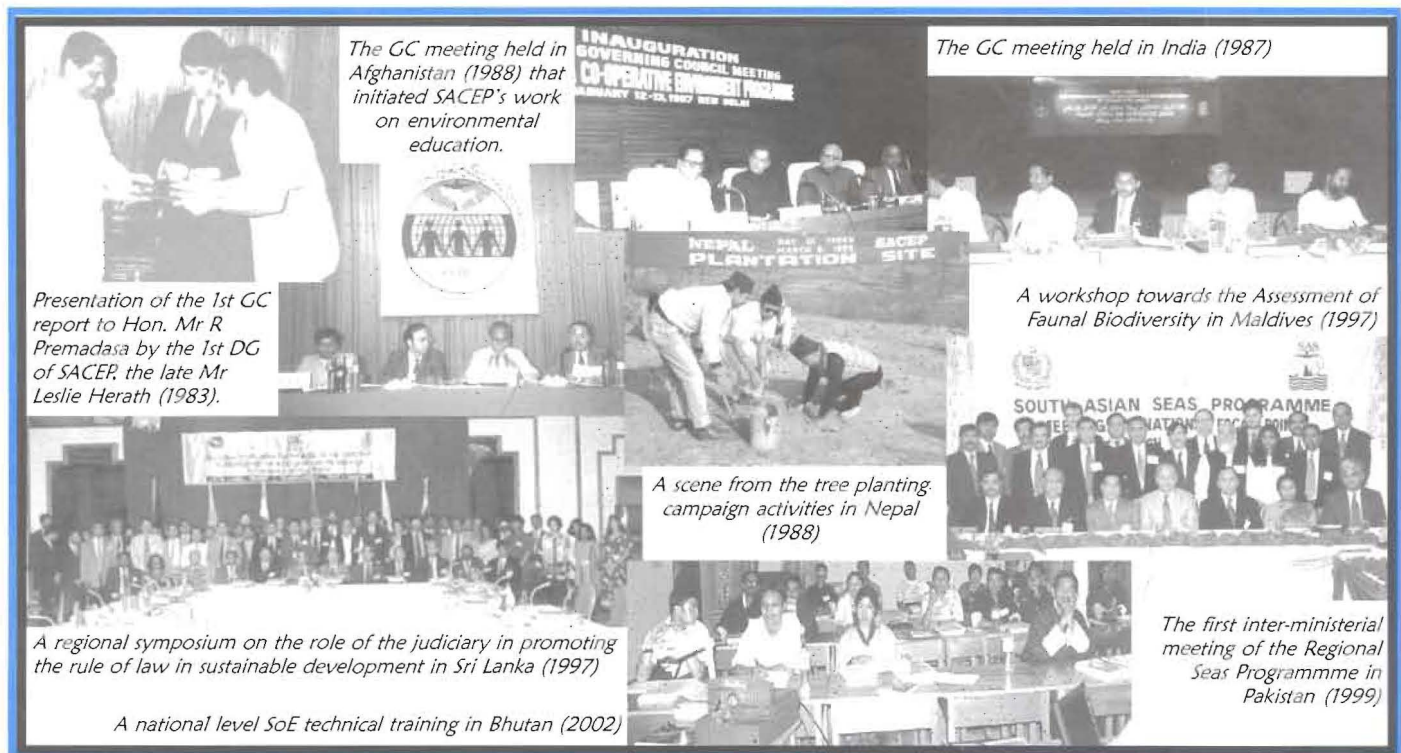
Assessment of Faunal Biodiversity in the Region: This Assessment was undertaken with assistance from NORAD (1997). It produced an Assessment Manual on Faunal Biodiversity in South Asia and enabled documentation of the status of biodiversity in each country and the region.

Environmental Education and Training: With UNEP and CEE as partners a series of posters and storybooks for children were produced as educational and awareness creation material (1994).

A series of workshops (1995 - 97) led to the development of a co-operative plan for capacity building with emphasis placed on education as a means of achieving sustainable development. Building on this initiative the South Asia Environment Education and Training Action Plan, 2003-2007 was developed with CEE and UNEP-ROAP. This plan lays out strategies for achieving sustainable development through education and training and will be the basis for future work in this sphere.

Integrated Coastal Area Management: With NORAD's assistance, a 7-module course was developed for increasing knowledge and skills in integrated management. SACEP has played a key role in introducing new concepts, such as Integrated Coastal Area and River Basin Management (ICARM) to the region.

Compliance and Enforcement of MEAs: Through the Asia-Pacific workshop on Enforcement with and Compliance of Multilateral Environmental Agreements hosted with UNEP in 2003, opportunities were created for information exchange and experience sharing on a wide scale (See Pg 6).



The GC meeting held in Afghanistan (1988) that initiated SACEP's work on environmental education.

The GC meeting held in India (1987)

Presentation of the 1st GC report to Hon. Mr R Premadasa by the 1st DG of SACEP, the late Mr Leslie Herath (1983).

A workshop towards the Assessment of Faunal Biodiversity in Maldives (1997)

A scene from the tree planting campaign activities in Nepal (1988)

A regional symposium on the role of the judiciary in promoting the rule of law in sustainable development in Sri Lanka (1997)

The first inter-ministerial meeting of the Regional Seas Programme in Pakistan (1999)

A national level SoE technical training in Bhutan (2002)



Looking to the Future... SACEP's Governing Council Endorses SACEP's Strategy and Work Programme for the Next 5 Years

In order to finalise the Strategy and Work programme of SACEP for the next five years, a meeting of SACEP's National Focal Points, followed by the 3rd Special Session of the Governing Council was held from 4-6 November 2003 in Colombo Sri Lanka. A work programme that looks at short term (2004-05) and long term (2004-08) activities covering subject areas including marine and coastal habitats, climate change, land degradation, pollution, water quality, energy issues etc., was endorsed by the GC.

Some of the salient features that were agreed upon to strengthen and revitalise the organisation are as follows:

- As SACEP has a role to play in building regional co-operation towards achieving the goals of sustainable development and environmental protection, it was recommended that SACEP should concentrate on issues of regional significance that complement and supplement the work being carried out by the member country governments, with expressed focus in the following work areas:
 - Assessments and Strategy Development
 - Experience Sharing and Networking and
 - Capacity Building
- The work programme undertaken should reflect general priorities set by WSSD/MDG/SoE reports with attention to issues of poverty, equity, gender, economic stability, and cultural norms of the region. Areas of work for SACEP and the thematic clusters recommended include:

The Ministers from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal gather to light the oil lamp at the 3rd special session of SACEP's GC.



Heads of the delegations and heads of UNEP, ROAP and SACEP present at the GC meeting

- Achieving MDG goals - Water and Sanitation issues, energy - particularly renewable energy etc
- Coastal area management inclusive of mangroves/forests
- Waste management issues as relevant to the GPA/LBA priorities
- Adaptation to Climate Change
- Bio-safety issues in the bio diversity agenda

- The Work Programmes are to be developed and

implemented in collaboration with partners outside the government while strengthening links and collaborative work with NFPs and Subject Area Focal Points (SAFP). Bangladesh and India accepted to co-host the Climate Change SAFF while Bio-safety was included within the Biodiversity SAFF hosted by India.

- Recruitment of additional staff to carry out functions and responsibilities envisaged under the strategy to be done in a phased manner in line with the availability of financial resources. The position of Director Programmes to be filled first and as soon as possible.
- The establishment of an Advisory Committee to assist SACEP with technical and other support services needed to carry out the work programme.
- Establishing close co-operation with SAARC in the field of environment.
- To acquire additional financial resources to strengthen the Secretariat, the establishment of the Corpus Fund was accepted in concept and the Director General was requested to explore modalities and options in this regard.

From the Ministers' Statements...

"Bangladesh reiterates that a sound and unthreatened ecosystem is among the necessities of a healthy environment. Equally of vital necessity has been enhancing the adaptive capacity of the poor and marginalised... Bangladesh, hence, likes to see determined, decisive and sincere efforts made as an outcome of this meeting towards achieving a sustainable resource management both at national and regional levels."

Hon. Mr. Shajahan Siraj, Minister of Environment and Forest Bangladesh

"...Given the will of the member states, SACEP can be re-vitalised and transformed into a more useful and dynamic organisation, the benefits of which can be reaped by all the member countries."

H.E. Mr. Dasho Nado Rinchen, Deputy Minister of Environment, Bhutan

"The ecological and developmental problems of the South Asian Region transcend the national and administrative boundaries, which require concerted co-operative action in dealing with them effectively. In this context, SACEP has fulfilled the need for a regional arrangement for sharing knowledge and information together with forging a common effort to tackle the existing environmental problems."

Hon. Mr. Buddhi Man Tamang, Minister for Population and Environment, Nepal

"While recognising the progress so far made by SACEP, I wish to express that there is tremendous potential for achieving further success and development in the field of environment, specially facilitating a wide range of activities that are implemented by member countries. I believe that we should proactively develop projects and programmes and work closely with international agencies such as UNEP in order to achieve our goals."

Hon. Mr. Rukman Senanayake, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Sri Lanka



SACEP is Uniquely Placed to Play a Supportive Role for South Asian Countries in Terms of:

- Assisting to build political commitment and coverage to environmental needs at a high level within the countries and region.
- Increasing regional initiatives that promote co-management of natural resources that are of benefit to the whole region.
- Serving as a central node based in the region for co-ordinating the management of transboundary environmental issues.
- Commissioning or supporting assessments, studies etc., that add to the overall knowledge base in the region that can be drawn upon for decision making and policy formulation.
- Building partnerships with a range of organisations to increase international co-operation to garner the requisite resources and expertise to foster technical and policy development within the region.
- Creating awareness and increasing consciousness to new concepts and approaches to integrating human and natural systems.
- Networking and information sharing to keep stakeholders up-to-date with the latest news, initiatives, lessons learnt etc.
- Institutional strengthening through building the capacities and skills of the manpower in the region to plan, implement and monitor environmental and sustainable development activities.

Building Partnerships for Sustainable Development

Partnerships and co-operation between governments, communities, NGOs and regional and multilateral institutions are increasingly seen as critical drivers for the achievement of sustainable development. The focus on partnerships was one of the salient features of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg last year.

Partnerships are particularly important in the South Asian context, given the diversity and complexity of the environmental and development challenges in the region. Partnerships harness the individual and collective strengths of the participating organisations and provide opportunities to achieve high quality outcomes through multi-dimensional approaches. For this reason the member countries revised SACEP's mission statement at the recent GC Meeting to emphasise the importance of collaborative action:

"The Mission of SACEP is to promote regional co-operation in South Asia in the field of environment, both natural and human in the context of sustainable development and on issues of economic and social development which also impinge on the environment and vice versa; to support conservation and management of natural resources of the region and to work closely with all national, regional, and international institutions, governmental and non governmental, as well as experts and groups engaged in such co-operation and conservation efforts."

SACEP is itself a partnership of its member countries, working through the National Focal Point and Subject Area Focal Point networks.

Partnerships have been established with international organisations to address several priority environmental concerns in the region:

- UNEP, UNEP-ROAP and UNEP-RRCA.AP have been constant collaborators in SACEP's activities and have afforded extension of many activities to the region.
- GIWA (2001) – Water Quality Assessment in the Bay of Bengal Region.
- IMO (2001) – for activities related to oil spill contingency planning and implementation of MARPOL.
- NORAD has been one of SACEP's main supporters for a wide range of projects.
- SEI-Sweden (1998) – Transboundary Air Pollution issues.
- GCRMN (1997), CORDIO (1999) and ICRAN (2002) – Management and Protection of Coral Reefs and other Coastal Ecosystems.
- UNEP-GPA (1997) – Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities.

SACEP is now working to expand its collaborative network inline with the revised mission statement and to facilitate the implementation of its Work Programme for 2004-2008.

SACEP is exploring opportunities to work with organisations that have a compatible programmatic focus. There is particular interest in mutually beneficial links with institutions and groups working in national and regional priority subject areas such as biodiversity, energy & environment, management of freshwater resources, and coastal & marine area management.

SACEP believes that working together is the most effective and efficient approach to address the challenges of the region.



Report of the Asia-Pacific Workshop on Compliance with and Enforcement of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs)

This workshop was a collaborative effort of UNEP, the Environment Ministry of Sri Lanka and SACEP and was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 14-19 September, 2003. It was inaugurated by Hon. Mr Rukman Senanayake, the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Government of Sri Lanka. Over 70 participants representing 18 countries spanning Asia and the Pacific as well as convention secretariats, technical experts, UNEP (Nairobi) and SACEP were in attendance.

Over 500 MEAs have been enforced through time. About 200 of them are global agreements while regional, sub-regional agreements make up the rest. MEAs provide a far reaching platform to build international commitment to mitigate pressing global environmental issues.

In order to increase efficacy, reduce duplication and get better application of MEAs UNEP has developed the "Guidelines on Compliance with and Enforcement of Multilateral Environmental Agreements" that was developed through a series of experts meetings. This document was adopted at a special session of the UNEP Governing Council in February 2002. UNEP Executive Director Mr. Klaus Töpfer stated that "The guidelines are a tool box which countries can use to develop the laws, standards, institutions and initiatives necessary to put their environmental commitments into practice".

To increase the use and effectiveness of the guidelines UNEP is preparing a manual that compiles explanatory text, case studies, checklists etc, of initiatives that are in use. The purpose and value of the manual is that it gives examples of options and tools available for implementation. It aims to be applicable and useful to various stakeholders covering the range of MEAs.

Scenes from the Workshop

Over 70 participants from Asia & the Pacific were in attendance and shared their experiences.



Countries represented were developing nations and many highlighted the need to increase capacities of personnel to undertake the obligations of the various MEAs, and the need to strengthen local institutions and structures to regulate and monitor activities. Some also pointed out the need for better preparatory and negotiating skills. The need to build a strong voice to make a solid case and not be disadvantaged by larger lobbies or interests groups was also stated.

This workshop was the first in a series of workshops that will be held in various locations to get inputs on content and structure towards finalising this draft manual. The workshops are also a platform to impress the importance of MEAs, its compliance and enforcement and an opportunity to increase awareness and highlight country experiences.

The Hon.Minister Mr Rukman Senanayake in his keynote address stated that "MEAs are the principle means by which the world community undertakes to protect and preserve the environment... They also constitute one of the most important means for developing new legal contracts and principles such as the common heritage of mankind, the common but differential responsibility and the polluter pays principle". Mr Mahboob Elahi, Director General of SACEP in his address stated that a challenge facing us today is to be able to "integrate and harmonise MEAs and their compliance and enforcement systems into broader social and economic development streams to create the required synergies for the welfare and prosperity of the societies".

Case studies were presented from South and South East Asia and the Pacific Islands, thereby giving a wide geographical spread of issues pertaining to applicability, compliance and enforcement. Representatives from Convention Secretariats such as the Convention on Climate Change, The Ozone Secretariat, the Convention on Migratory Species, and the Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants presented the salient features of relevant MEAs along with a briefing on progress made and mechanisms available to carry out and assist with compliance and enforcement.

Assessing Capacities for Compliance and Enforcement of MEAs

The large number of MEAs and their growing complexity have led to increasing calls for better coordination and harmonisation during preparation, negotiation and implementation stages. The varying levels of capacities in different countries further compound this challenge. To this end GEF's Capacity Development Initiative (CDI) has developed a National Capacity Self Assessment (NCSA) programme to assist countries in identifying their capacity development needs, with regard to the Rio Conventions.

In parallel, the United Nations University (UNU), in 1997 launched the Inter-linkages Initiative to promote a better integrated approach to sustainable development planning through synergies and co-ordination among MEAs. In coordination with UNDP/GEF, the UNU has been working with countries in order to conduct national case studies on MEA management and these studies serve as a baseline assessment of the status quo, strengths and weaknesses of MEA management with due attention to cross-sectoral dimensions in implementation. In South Asia, UNU has completed an assessment for Bhutan and another has been proposed in Sri Lanka.

For further information contact: Dr. Jerry Velasquez, Email: jerryv@hq.unu.edu or visit: www.unu.edu/inter-linkages/, or: www.geic.or.jp

**Support Available for Sound Chemical Management Activities – For 2004 -2005**

Deadline: 29 February 2004.

The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) with funding from the European Union (EU) plan to support 15 developing countries and countries in economic transition for National Profile Preparation, Priority Setting and Information Exchange for Sound Chemical management.

For additional information please contact:

Senior Programme Coordinator, Training and Capacity Building Programmes in Chemicals and Waste Management
UNITAR, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 GENEVE 10, Switzerland
Fax: +41 22 917 80 47

E-mail: cwm@unitar.org or Website: www.unitar.org/cwm/CountryAssist.asp**A New Approach for International Chemical Management**

An international workshop to prepare a Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) was held in Bangkok from 9–13 November, 2003. More than 500 delegates from over 120 countries, 14 UN bodies, 4 IGOs, 24 NGOs, and observers participated at the workshop. This was the first substantive step in the SAICM process (PrepCom1) that will conclude in a final International Conference on Chemical Management in the future. As a regional representative body, SACEP was invited to attend and offer its perspectives.

The delegates discussed in detail issues to be addressed in developing and structuring a SAICM, and considered the possible outcomes of the SAICM process.

At the conclusion of the workshop, delegates adopted the report of PrepCom1, comprising: a summary of discussions; an addendum containing issues to be addressed during the development of SAICM; several annexes with items to be

forwarded to the next step (PrepCom2); and a proposal for inter-session activities. Many delegates expressed that minimising adverse effects of chemicals on human health and the environment is a universally critical objective and its success depends on political commitment and a paradigm shift over the coming years.

The use of chemicals in South Asia has increased with little attention to proper management thereby increasing harmful effects on human and ecosystem health. South Asian countries need to enact adequate measures for the use and disposal of chemical substances and also establish policies and structures to avoid becoming a dumping ground for hazardous wastes and toxic chemicals.

Ratification of International Conventions on Chemical Management in South Asia (as of November 2003)

Country	Basel Convention	Rotterdam Convention on PICs	Stockholm Convention on POPs
Bangladesh	1993 (a)	NA	2003 (s)
Bhutan	2002 (a)	NA	NA
India	1992 (r)	NA	2002 (s)
Maldives	1992 (a)	NA	NA
Nepal	1996 (a)	NA	2002 (s)
Pakistan	1994 (a)	1999 (s)	2001 (s)
Sri Lanka	1992 (a)	NA	2001 (s)

a: accession r: ratified s: signatory

SACEP is keen to work in partnership to adopt standardised and common approaches for chemicals management at a sub-regional level and to initiate programmes for assessment, capacity building, information exchange and networking.

For further details on SAICM or chemical management see www.chem.unep.ch/saicm/ or e-mail: chemicals@unep.ch

The Rotterdam Convention Enters into Force on 24 February, 2004

In September 1998, governments adopted the Rotterdam Convention on a legally binding Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure for selected hazardous chemicals and pesticides in International Trade. It establishes a first line of defense by giving importing countries the tools and information they need to identify potential hazards and exclude chemicals they cannot manage safely. If a country agrees to import chemicals, the Convention promotes their safe use through labeling standards, technical assistance, and other forms of support. It also ensures that exporters comply with the requirements.

Armenia became the 50th country to ratify the Convention (in November 2003) thereby triggering the 90-day countdown to the treaty's entry into force.

The Convention starts with 22 hazardous pesticides, and 5 industrial chemicals. Five more pesticides have already been flagged for inclusion, while many more are likely to be added. Some pesticides covered, such as monocrotophos and parathion, are extremely hazardous and can present a severe threat to the health of farmers in developing countries.

For further information visit the website: www.pic.int or e-mail pic@unep.ch (interim secretariat based in UNEP, Geneva) OR pic@fao.org (interim secretariat based in FAO, Rome)



A Training Course on How to Deal with Oil Spills

In order to have in place a workforce that is better prepared to handle oil spills, the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) together with SACEP conducted an OPRC Level 2 Training Course for Supervisors and On scene Commanders from the South Asia Seas Region in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 22-26 September, 2003.

The objectives of the course were to elaborate on how to command and coordinate responses to an oil spill and to facilitate the elements needed for the implementation of the Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation (OPRC).

Thirteen personnel from Bangladesh (1), India (2), Maldives (2), Pakistan (2) and Sri Lanka (6) involved in overseeing operations related to ports and shipping attended this workshop. The training modules covered oil spill behaviour, fate and effects, the use of dispersants, containment, protection, recovery, clean up, contingency planning (national/regional), response management, operations planning, site safety, liability and compensation, media relations, and briefing. The course content was activated by simulation and syndicate exercises with possible scenarios that could confront them in the event of an oil spill.



The participants and trainers involved in a syndicate exercise at the OPRC training

Preparing Ahead: Oil Spill Contingency Planning from the IMO Secretariat

Why Do You Need a Contingency Plan?

Major oil spills are not everyday occurrences; in fact they may happen just once or twice within a country's shores or may not happen at all, so then one might question the worth of an oil spill contingency plan or a regional agreement or a global convention...

As long as oil/petroleum is transported and used, there is the probability of accidents; and with it comes the probability of short term and long term damage to property, health risks, effects on ecosystems, disruption of economic activities and huge expenses. Dealing with an oil spill is a complex issue that requires a variety of activities to fall into place to cope with such an emergency situation. The services of many players are required and activities extend farther than just the clean up to assessing damage/spread, search and rescue operations, controlling fires, dealing with the media, lightening of cargo, salvaging activities, restoration work etc. Their services, resources and expertise may also be needed over extended periods of time. Therefore if all these various actors are to be mobilised and used effectively having a pre-planned plan of action gives the advantage of being well prepared. Therein lies the value of a contingency plan.

Global and Regional Initiatives for Oil Spill Contingency Planning

Dealing with oil spills can be handled at local, national and regional levels with tiered plans – to address various degrees of oil spills that could take place aboard the ship, in the port, from pipelines or from accidents in ocean waters. Small scale oil spills can be handled by local authorities but for a major oil spill of more than several hundreds tonnes, an individual country may not have the resources to cope with the problem.

Oil spills are also transboundary and therefore can fall within the jurisdiction of several countries. The scope of the response involves other countries as well as different international organisations set up to assist in this type of situation such as the IMO, the International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation (ITOPF) and resources from the international oil industry.

In the global context IMO has been in the forefront for instituting mechanisms to deal adequately with oil pollution incidents and to protect marine environments. Their strategy looks at strengthening the capacity and actions of national and regional bodies, providing technical support and garnering the much needed co-operation of other relevant organisations so as to deal with the problem efficiently and avoid duplication.

Regional strategies are also needed as conditions, infrastructure and issues vary and solutions must cater to these localised conditions. UNEP coordinates 15 Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans designed to help countries protect their common marine and coastal environments. The contingency plan establish an agreed strategy that lays out the overall policy and includes an operational plan that is a descriptive plan of action. One of these Action Plans is the Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan for South Asia. A framework has been developed and established under the South Asian Seas - Regional Seas Programme, which includes Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The Regional Plan envisions mutual co-operation in case of a major oil spill incidence. Towards this end the countries are obligated to put into place national and local contingency plans. In practical terms getting the needed regional collaboration and co-operation requires structures in various countries within a region to be so that it allows for more efficient coordination, while being party to regional or global agreements also has the added advantage of resource mobilisation.



International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation (OPRC)

OPRC Convention is an international convention/global agreement developed by IMO that has been in force since May 1995 with objectives to: "facilitate international co-operation and mutual assistance in preparing for and responding to a major oil pollution incident and to encourage states to develop and maintain adequate capability to deal with oil pollution emergencies".

Implementation of the OPRC Convention brings together member states of IMO, and the oil and shipping industry. IMO co-operates with other UN organisations in order to assist countries to be prepared and have trained personnel that can handle an oil pollution incident.

Some of the salient features of the convention:

- International co-operation and mutual assistance (capacity building, reimbursement of cost of assistance)
- Pollution reporting
- National and regional preparedness and response capabilities (contingency plans)
- Technical co-operation and transfer of technologies (including training and R&D)
- Institutional support (awareness, information sharing, technical assistance)

The oil spill in July 2003 in Pakistan highlighted the usefulness of a contingency plan - that when the need arises can draw on well prepared human and physical resources. It also allows for regional support to carry out the response and also lays at the country's disposal the needed financial resources. All in all being prepared seems to be a win-win situation.

Oil Spill Disaster in Karachi Port

The MT Tasman Spirit carrying 67,000 tonnes of light crude oil was grounded 1.5 nautical miles off Karachi port due to bad weather.

As of 18th August about 27,000 tonnes of oil was spilled into a rich and diverse marine/estuarine ecosystem, that is the habitat of green and olive ridley sea turtles, dolphins and 2 species of whales.

According to document titled "Impact of Oil Spill and Bioremedial Measures to Mitigate the Effects on Marine Environment Along the Clifton Beach and Adjoining Areas of Karachi" quoted in "The Dawn" newspaper (see reference), crude oil and its components are highly poisonous and recalcitrant, with some persisting for up to 500 years in the soil and sediment. The report also states that mangroves in the coastal areas of Karachi are breeding areas for deep sea fish and toxicity from the oil spill could enter into the human food chain through the consumption of these fish and other aquatic resources, thereby causing health risks.

Mr Töpfer while praised Pakistani authorities, the International Maritime Organisation and oil tanker industry representatives for difficult salvage, oil removal and recovery efforts undertaken. However he stated that the incident underscored the importance of regional contingency plans and cooperation agreements, which could help mobilise oil-fighting equipment and expertise from within neighbouring countries in times of crisis.

References:

- www.dawn.com/2003/11/05/local1.htm;
- www.pakepa.org/oilspill.htm;
- www.roap.unep.org/html/nr/nrhq03-46.htm

For further information contact:

The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) - www.imo.org

The International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation Limited (ITOPF) - www.itopf.com

The Oil Spill Training Company - www.oilspilltraining.com

East Asia Response Limited (EARL) - www.earl.com.sg

A New Strategy for the Regional Seas Programme

The Fifth Global Meeting of Regional Seas Conventions and Action Plans was held from 26 - 28 November, 2003 in Kenya, where the new Strategy for the programme was discussed. The Regional Seas Programme Strategy was revised in order to effectively address evolving challenges and the priorities identified in UNEP GC Decision 22/2 III A, and in order to contribute to reaching the relevant targets of Agenda 21, the WSSD Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Development Goals. The proposed Regional Seas Strategy stresses the need for increasing visibility and the sustainability of the Regional Seas Programme, and the use of the Regional Seas Unit as a Service and Information Centre. In keeping with the UNEP's motto - "Environment for Development" the Regional Seas Programme has an important role to play.

Dr Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of UNEP opening the meeting expressed his appreciation to the proposed Regional Seas Strategy, stating that the Regional Seas should serve as a vital and vibrant instrument in the international agenda.

The meeting was also briefed on an exercise being carried out through the GPA in the Regional Seas Programmes to assess the information availability on domestic wastewater treatment and the feasibility of defining regional Wastewater Emission Targets (WET). This would give a comprehensive overview on environmental aspects of water and sanitation as an input to the Global Ministerial Environmental Forum (GMEF) and the preparatory process for the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-12), and an exploration on the possible use of global, regional and/or national priority WET. The need to address the issue on financing domestic wastewater collection and treatment was also discussed.



A Briefing on the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)



Douglas Hykle, Senior CMS Advisor making his presentation

A presentation and discussion session on the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) was held for Sri Lankan stakeholders by Mr Douglas Hykle, Senior CMS Advisor on 19 September, 2003 in Colombo Sri Lanka. This meeting was hosted by SACEP and was attended by

personnel from government, academia/R&D and NGOs interested in migratory species management.

The session shared information on the features of CMS, and mechanisms in use to deal with issues facing migratory species including fish, birds and mammals. One such mechanism described was the MoU on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South East Asia (IOSEA). The presentation also pointed out that CMS has links to other MEAs such as CITES, CBD, RAMSAR, and WHC and how work undertaken should be and can be complementary and mutually reinforcing - allowing for synergies, better management and avoiding duplication.

The meeting was also aimed at starting a discussion on what can be done under this Convention for migratory species in Sri Lanka. Mr Hykle pointed out that Sri Lanka is uniquely placed to undertake work with CMS as many species covered under the convention are found on the island.

Some of the issues that were discussed:

- The need for further research on marine mammals, bats, and birds was highlighted.
- Possible co-operative work on marine turtles within the region (under IOSEA) was indicated.
- A publication entitled "Marine Turtle By-catch in Sri Lanka" carried out by the Turtle Conservation Project (a local NGO) with CMS support was elaborated upon.
- Having two focal points within the country to handle marine and land issues was suggested. It was also suggested that the focal points should be supported by multi-stakeholder committees to assist with implementation.
- It was highlighted that in Sri Lanka what is hindering projects on migratory species conservation is the lack of co-ordination and sharing of information and not so much the lack of institutions and skills.

Future activities that could be done in collaboration with the CMS Secretariat were as follows:

- Initiating a brain storming session involving all relevant players to suggest work and responsibilities under CMS.
- Develop mechanisms and ways of increasing communication among the players.
- It was also suggested that Sri Lanka should look into hosting the next Conference of Parties for CMS.

For further information on CMS or IOSEA contact:

Mr. Douglas Hykle: iosea@un.org

Or visit the websites:

www.wcmc.org.uk/cms or www.ioseaturtles.org

A Proposal for a Collaborative Effort to Conserve and Manage Marine Turtles in South Asia

Marine turtles are ideal flagship species for promoting marine conservation due to their migratory nature and as the protection of the species from extinction can stimulate the conservation of important tracts of coastal habitats on a regional level. The South Asian Seas region has a coastline of more than 11,000 km that supports a rich concentration of biodiversity, including five species of marine turtles. All 5 species are found in the South Asian countries of Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Marine turtles receive protection under two primary multilateral agreements – CMS and CITES, and a range of national legislation. South Asian countries have promulgated legislation that legally forbids the age-old practices of trade and consumptive use of turtles. Such restrictions do not necessarily prevent the depletion of the species or the degradation of the ecosystem. It also impacts the poor and the impoverished more severely as in many instances restriction and prohibition of use is not accompanied by viable alternative livelihoods and therefore the resource continues to be used illegally. The support or capacity within the state or other institutions to carry out the needed enforcement in many cases is also not forthcoming. Turtle survival is also further encumbered by indirect means such as development activities along the coast, pollution of coastal waters, and incidental capture in fishing nets.

As the marine turtle populations in the South Asian Seas region are a shared resource, their continued existence can only be assured if all Range States contribute and commit to their conservation. A mechanism set up to support this process is the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU). Presently SACEP and the IOSEA Secretariat have begun a dialogue to develop a project to promote the conservation and integrated management of marine turtles and their habitats in the South Asian Seas region. The project aims include: 1) Information gathering and sharing on the status of marine turtles in the region, best conservation/management practices and case studies for alternative livelihoods; 2) Reviewing and strengthening national legislation; 3) Making recommendations for designation of critical sites for marine turtles; and 4) Developing standardised research techniques.

Further information can be obtained from Karin Fernando, Programme Officer (SACEP): kf_sacep@eol.lk



*Source: From a postcard
(Contact person Mohamed Zahir)*



Making Connections Between Ecosystem Health and Human Well-being From the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Secretariat

All people depend on Earth's living systems for both life and livelihood, but the linkages between ecosystems and human well-being are not always clear. Therefore decisions concerning natural resources are often made without fully accounting for the associated consequences. For example, the increased use of fertilisers in an upland agricultural region might yield more maize, but nutrient run-off from the fields might degrade coastal fisheries and alter livelihoods of local fishing villages. To help strengthen natural resource decisions like this, public and private institutions, scientists, and concerned citizens are collaborating to undertake the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA). Bringing together leading scientists and policy-makers, the MA promotes collaboration and partnership to increase our understanding of the information and tools available to guide decisions related to ecosystems. In his April 2000 report *We The Peoples*, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan cited the MA as "an outstanding example of the sort of international scientific and political co-operation that is needed to further the cause of sustainable development."

The MA is a four-year (2001 – 2005) international scientific assessment designed to meet the needs of decision-makers and the public for information concerning the consequences of ecosystem change on human well-being, and options for responding to those changes. The MA provides assessment information requested by the international biodiversity-related Conventions: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD), the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS). The MA has also been welcomed as a source of information by many other stakeholders: indigenous groups, the private sector, and civil society have all expressed their interest in the MA findings. These various groups all provided input to the design of the MA, and continue to be part of the process. The MA focuses on ecosystem services, how ecosystem changes have affected human well-being, and scenarios of how changes might affect people in the future. The MA is also analysing response options that might be adopted at local, national or global scales to improve ecosystem management, and thereby contribute to human well-being and poverty alleviation.

The issue of scale is a central focus of the MA. The causes of local ecosystem change can sometimes be traced to global environmental change, and sometimes global change are most directly felt at the local level. For these reasons, the MA also includes interlinked sub-global assessments undertaken at local to national to regional levels. At the same time each sub-global activity has the flexibility to modify the applications of the MA framework and focus on specific issues to make the assessment most relevant to local circumstances and therefore directly meeting the needs of decision-makers.

The approaches and methods used in the MA are described in *Ecosystems and Human Well-being: A Framework for Assessment*, published by Island Press in September 2003 (also available on the MA website). The assessment results

will be published starting early 2005 in four in-depth reports. The results will also be synthesised into a set of seven shorter reports covering specific themes like biodiversity, drylands, and business. They will be designed to respond to specific questions from the MA's user audiences to assist with decision making.

The MA design was guided by the belief that assessment findings will better stimulate policy responses if the intended "users" are fully engaged in the assessment process. To this end a variety of mechanisms to deepen user participation were undertaken including multi-stakeholder policy dialogues in more than 25 countries around the world, open calls for participation in the activities of the Assessment, and development of a network of approximately 30 Affiliated Scientific Organisations and National Academies. During 2004, an extensive review process will be undertaken to solicit further inputs, increase participation and promote engagement and outreach. We expect that this far-reaching consultative process will result in MA products better reflecting user needs and users building ownership and confidence in the results.

Through extensive collaboration and engagement with a broad spectrum of users, the MA hopes to spark a shift in thinking about "environmental" decisions – and weave nature into the concerns of other institutions, such as ministries of trade or private businesses. Those involved in the design of the MA anticipate that the tools, expert networks, and information will extend beyond the initial project and continue to yield results in terms of both scientific knowledge and improved policy. The engagement and consultation with various users has confirmed that the concepts supporting the MA are directly relevant to sustainable development actions in many countries and regions. The MA methodologies are being used in more than 25 sub-global assessments and have been discussed and debated by stakeholder groups in many additional countries. Our close work with both global institutions and consultations with local stakeholders have demonstrated that the MA is a good example of a broadly relevant and collaborative effort that supports sound policy making and environmental management.

Upcoming Event

Bridging Scales and Epistemologies: Linking Local Knowledge and Global Science in Multi-scale Assessments
Alexandria Egypt, March 2004.

To explore mechanisms for conducting multiscale assessments, and for using multiple sources of information and knowledge (traditional, practitioners, indigenous, scientific) in assessments.

Interested in joining the MA as a reviewer?

Please contact Wai Leng Chan, Programme Co-ordinator: chan@millenniumassessment.org

For further information on the MA process please visit: www.millenniumassessment.org



Priority Paper on Sustainable Development in South Asia

A draft *Priority Paper on Sustainable Development in South Asia* has been prepared for UNEP by Development Alternatives (DA). This paper is a follow up to the *South Asia Strategy Paper* that was delivered to the World Summit on Sustainable Development last year.

A summary of the *Priority Paper* was presented at the SACEP National Focal Point Meeting by Dr. George C. Varughese from DA for the information of the member countries.

This paper highlights that recent regional and national assessments point towards four broad thematic sustainable development priorities for South Asia in the next decade:

- Eliminating poverty and creating human security
- Conserving the natural resource endowments
- Securing the economic base
- Strengthening institutional systems

Recognising that the challenges and priorities of sustainable development clearly extend beyond national boundaries, the paper strongly emphasises regional co-operation in specific areas of high potential impact i.e. poverty eradication, strengthening trade and economic policies and sharing and managing natural resources. Some of the recommended initiatives include innovative ideas such as the formation of a South Asian Biodiversity Conservation Agreement and the creation of a South Asian Energy Alliance.

A central theme of this paper is that South Asia is in a position to set its own sustainable development agenda without excessive reliance on external assistance. It points out that the region already has the necessary technical expertise and economic strength to support this agenda. The challenge for the countries of South Asia is to harness their own "internal" potential and to build stronger institutional mechanisms for regional co-operation.

What's in a song?

Music and songs probably get more airplay and reach more people on a global scale than any other source of information; and throughout time have stirred feelings and thoughts and maybe even revolutions... The song "Big Yellow Taxi" by Joni Mitchell was released in 1970 and was inspired by her first glimpse of Hawaii from a hotel room. Here are some of the verses...

*They paved paradise and put up a parking lot
With a pink hotel, a boutique, and a swingin' hot spot
Don't it always seem to go
That you don't know what you got 'til it's gone
They paved paradise and put up a parking lot*

*They took all the trees, and put em in a tree museum
And they charged the people a dollar and a half to see them
No, no, no
Don't it always seem to go
That you don't know what you got 'til it's gone
They paved paradise, and put up a parking lot*

*Hey farmer, farmer, put away your DDT
I don't care about spots on my apples,
Leave me the birds and the bees...Please
Don't it always seem to go
That you don't know what you got 'til it's gone
They paved paradise and put up a parking lot
Hey now, they paved paradise to put up a parking lot
Why not?*

*I don't wanna give it
Why you wanna give it
Why you wanna give it all away...*

They paved paradise and put up a parking lot...

Share your news with us

Please feel free to send us articles for publication in forthcoming issues or share your views, comments, and suggestions on this newsletter. You are also welcome to submit names to our mailing list.

South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme

#10, Anderson Road, Colombo-5, Sri Lanka.

Tel: 94-11- 2552761/2589787 Fax: 94-11-2589369 Email: np-sas@eureka.lk

The Mission of SACEP is to

promote regional co-operation in South Asia in the field of environment, both natural and human in the context of sustainable development and on issues of economic and social development which also impinge on the environment and vice versa; to support conservation and management of natural resources of the region and to work closely with all national, regional, and international institutions, governmental and non governmental, as well as experts and groups engaged in such co-operation and conservation efforts.

For further information about SACEP please visit our website: www.sacep.org