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- International Environmental Days observed by SACEP

The 12th Meeting of the Governing Council of SACEP



The 12th Meeting of the Governing Council of South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) was held from 1 – 3 November 2010 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. This High Level Meeting was attended by the Ministers of Environment and Senior Officials of the member countries of SACEP namely; Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Hon' D. M. Jayaratne, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka was the Chief Guest at the Inauguration. The 12GC-SACEP was a significant one as it was held immediately after the CoP 10 of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and agree upon the future activities of SACEP which included adoption of two Major Resolutions; 'South Asia's Biodiversity Beyond 2010' and 'Clean Fuels and Vehicles'.

12th GC Resolution on 'South Asia's Biodiversity Beyond 2010'

We, the Environmental Ministers of South Asian Countries viz. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka assembled in Colombo, Sri Lanka at the 12th Meeting of the Governing Council of SACEP on 3rd November 2010;

Aware that Biodiversity is essential for human life which generates goods and services including the provision of food and medicine, regulation of climate and water flow, supporting of soil formation and cultural values;

Emphasizing the role played by healthy ecosystems at the global, regional and national levels in moderating the effects of climate change;

Noting that the biodiversity loss has negative impacts on climate change and that the two are among the main global environmental challenges.

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A Historical Moment Awaits: South Asian Seas Regional Oil and Chemical Pollution Contingency Plan will come into force soon

The long awaited Regional Oil and Chemical Pollution Contingency Plan for South Asian Seas Region will be ratified by the five member countries soon. A Regional Oil and Chemical Pollution Contingency Plan and associated MoU were developed in association with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) for enhanced co-operation in the event of an Oil or Chemical Spill in the South Asian Seas region. Three member countries viz. Bangladesh, Maldives and Pakistan have already signed the MoU. India and Sri Lanka are at an advanced stage and would get cabinet sanction in due course. It is expected that SACEP Secretariat would receive the Signed MoU shortly.

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Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV)

The Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles is a UNEP initiated programme launched at the WSSD in Johannesburg in 2002 with the aims to encourage countries to adopt overall clean fuel and vehicles strategies, including vehicle and fuel standards, inspection and maintenance, development of public transport systems—including both motorised and non-motorised options and transportation demand management.

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Blue Flag Beach Certification Programme for South Asia

South Asian Seas Programme (SASP) of SACEP, in collaboration with the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) Denmark, with the financial support of UNEP took the message of "A Clean beach – A Tourist Haven" for

promoting sustainable tourism in the SAS region.

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Real Field Experience by On-board Training Workshop



A training workshop on Marine Resources Sampling, Data Collection and Interpretation for the South Asian Seas Region was organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India and UNEP. UN Division for Ocean Affairs and Law of Sea and UNEP-GRID Arendal were the other partners in this activity. It was the 1st of its kind that a training programme held in South Asian Seas Region which gave the real field exposure to the trainees by on-boarding a State of the Art Research Vessel, Sagar Kanya in mid sea of the Indian Ocean. 10 mid-level managers from the five SAS countries participated in this training programme which was held from 18 - 22 September 2009 in India.

Outputs Achieved :

- ✓ Strengthened the collaboration and interaction among the participants and with experts who will contribute to develop and implement future National & Regional activities.
- ✓ The participants enhanced their skills and knowledge relevant to Ocean Policy Making from the hands-on experience and the lectures delivered by eminent resource

persons from the UNEP, UNDOALOS, UNEP GRID Arendal and number of Indian Research Institutions such as ICMAM PD - Chennai, NCAOR – Goa, INCOIS – Hyderabad, and the Indian Coast Guard. This enabled the participants to understand the importance of Ocean Data Collection and Interpretation which would benefit them to define policies and programmes

- ✓ The Training Manual which was launched at the Opening of the Workshop in Chennai, provided detailed information with research articles presented in Five Thematic Areas and also could be used as reference reading material in the field of Ocean Management. This document can be downloaded from the SACEP website.

Government of India offered to support the SAS member countries in Mapping Coral Reef Ecosystem as it is presently being executed in India by INCOIS and CholoGEN Project. The Secretariat has initiated a dialogue with UNDOALOS and UNEP GRID Arendal for follow up of the Training Workshop.

UNEP/ EU Funded Project on Marine Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs) in Coral Reef Ecosystems in South Asia



The project was successfully completed in December 2008 and the concluding reports were submitted by 31st March 2009. The outcome of the project was very encouraging and the South Asia Coral Reef Task Force (SACRTF) was

The following publications were released under the project:

- * Regional Communications Strategy for Coral Reef Management in South Asia
- * Regional Strategy for Coral Reef Management in South Asia

formed under this project.

The activities undertaken with the Small Scale Funding Agreement (SSFA) on Educational Awareness in member countries in MCPAs were very successful.

In view of the regional importance of this initiative, SACEP Secretariat is actively searching for possible donors to take the project activities forward. In this regard a meeting was held with Dr. Young Woo Park, Regional Director and Dr. Subrato Sinha, Environmental Affairs Officer of UNEP RRC-AP, where SACEP requested UNEP to support a small funded project to keep the SACRTF active.

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Blue Flag Beach Certification Programme



The Blue Flag is a voluntary exercise and certification Programme awarded by the FEE. This exclusive eco-label is presently awarded to more than 3200 beaches and marinas in 38 countries worldwide. This initiative is highly relevant as the five maritime countries of South Asia are endowed with coastal and marine resources which have enormous potential to develop sustainable tourism industry. The costs associated with unplanned and /or poorly managed tourism not only involves economic loss to the industry but also leads to the loss of traditional and indigenous ways of life, environmental quality and the natural resource base. In this regard as a first step the application of a voluntary Beach Certification Programme can be successfully used as one of the management tools.

SACEP/SASP organized National Workshops in Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka in February-March 2010 in collaboration

with the National Focal Points. These national events brought together all the relevant stakeholders and provided a broad assessment of the current status of coastal tourism as well as the priority actions that needed to be taken in order to develop sustainable coastal tourism industry, which is environmentally, socially and culturally sensitive.

These workshops provided a platform to develop National Programmes. Individual countries have agreed to pursue a follow up on the Beach Certification Programme. Preliminary site selection and identification of representatives for National Blue Flag committees were undertaken. SACEP/SASP developed a Regional Project from the inputs received from the National Workshops and has forward the same to UNEP for possible funding assistance.



Marine Biodiversity Assessment and Outlook 2010

In line with the International Year of Biodiversity and the 10th Meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP10) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) held in Japan, UNEP decided to prepare a Marine Biodiversity Outlook Report which covers all 18 Regional Seas Areas. The objective of this project was to enhance the understanding of key Regional and Global issues for marine biodiversity conservation through the issuance of Outlook Reports on the coastal areas covered by the Regional Seas Programmes. Furthermore, these Outlook Reports have contributed to the discussions on marine and coastal biodiversity at the COP 10 of the CBD.



UNEP entrusted SACEP to prepare the Outlook Report for the South Asian Seas Region and the Report was launched at the CBD COP 10, Nagoya, Japan in October 2010.

Report can be found in:

<http://marinebiodiversityseries.org/reports/UNEP%20Global%20Synthesis%20Marine%20Biodiversity%20Series.pdf>

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A Historical Moment Awaits:



South Asian Seas Region includes the marine and coastal areas of Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The region is at the high risk of likely oil and chemical spills as the world's major sea transport route from the Middle East to the Far East lies within the region. A total of some 525 million tonnes a year of crude oil pass into or through the Region – about 25 percent of total world movement of crude oil by sea. Additional maritime oil spill risks arise from non-tanker shipping, carriage of refined products, offshore exploration and production operations, and the transfer of oil cargoes at sea.

In the recent past, there were some major oil spill incidents like Tasman Spirit incident in Karachi, Pakistan in July 2003 and Amaanah Shah incident in rough seas off Koggala, on the south coast

of Sri Lanka. At both the occasions, individual countries did not have the capacity to handle the situation effectively and assistance from other countries were requested.

With the implementation of this Regional Oil and Chemical Pollution Contingency Plan, countries in the region can share the resources and expertise in the occasion of an oil spill in their territorial waters to tackle them effectively.

It is envisaged that once the SACEP Secretariat receives the signed MoU from all countries a Meeting of Plenipotentiaries will be convened.

12th GC Resolution on Clean Fuels and Vehicles

h the significant and increasing impacts that air pollutants can have on health, crops, natural ecosystems, man-made environment and their socio-economic consequences for South Asian countries,

Recalling the recommendations of representatives of governments at the Regional Workshop on Clean Fuels and Vehicles held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 22 – 23 March 2010 organized by SACEP in collaboration with UNEP's PCFV,

Mindful that vehicles, both gasoline and diesel, emit significant quantities of nitrogen oxides, sulphur oxides, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, and hydrocarbons which are harmful to human beings, other forms of life and the environment,

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South Asia's Biodiversity Beyond 2010.....

Recognizing the important role of South Asia's Biodiversity towards economic development and ecosystem services for the well being of our people and the world community at large;

Acknowledging the positive steps taken by governments of South Asia and the other various institutions and organizations to conserve the region's rich biodiversity, individually and collectively and understanding that much more need to be done;

Appreciating the initiatives taken by world leaders in implementing the Convention on Biological Diversity;

Expressing grave concern that the 2010 Biodiversity targets to halt the loss of biodiversity has not been reached;

Noting that the limited technical and financial resources had been an obstacle to achieving the 2010 target in South Asian countries;

Noting the 2020 targets and the Strategic Plan for the Period 2011 – 2020 adopted by the CBD CoP10 on 29th October 2010 at Nagoya, Japan;

Recognizing that the current rate of loss is a serious threat to the existing Biodiversity and immediate measures are required to reverse the loss of biodiversity

Emphasizing the importance of a holistic ecosystem management approach to biodiversity, poverty alleviation and economic development, and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;

Conscious that public awareness achieved through information, educational and motivational programmes on sustainable use of biodiversity positively contribute towards biodiversity conservation, human health and wellbeing, as well as economic development

Urge South Asian Governments and stakeholders to take necessary measures in conjunction with the international community to implement decisions of the Conference of the Parties to CBD and the actions identified in the third edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook to curb the continuing loss of biodiversity;

Emphasize the need for increased support to strengthen capacity for the implementation of the obligation of the Convention, in line with the updated Strategic Plan 2011-2020, including support for the updating of national biodiversity strategies and action plans

Urge SACEP to forge greater links and interaction with SAARC in line with the MoU signed between the two and also to take note of the signing of the SAARC Convention on Co-operation on Environment.

Malé Declaration on Control and Prevention of Air Pollution and Its Likely Trans-boundary Effects for South Asia

Phase I, II and III of the Malé Declaration on Control and Prevention of Air Pollution and its likely Trans-boundary Effects for South Asia was implemented successfully by UNEP in partnership with SACEP with the financial support from SIDA.

The implementation of Malé Declaration (MD) Phase IV started on 1st December 2009 and it will continue to assist the member countries to enhance their regional co-operation, monitoring, impact assessment, strengthen the initiatives started in the first three phases, and to initiate new ones.

As per the recommendations of the 10th and 11th Governing Councils, SACEP signed a MoU with UNEP in April 2010, within the framework of the 'Phase IV of the Malé Declaration on Control and Prevention of Air Pollution and its Likely Trans-boundary Effects for South Asia'.

Under the MoU SACEP will carry out the following tasks.

- ✓ Assist in conducting the feasibility study on the establishment of specialized regional centers
- ✓ Assist in conducting the feasibility study on developing a regional framework such as convention on air pollution in South Asia
- ✓ Compile a Report on the implementation of the Malé Declaration for the Governing Council of SACEP in consultation and consensus with the Malé Declaration Secretariat
- ✓ In collaboration with the Malé Declaration Secretariat, present the progress in the implementation of the Malé Declaration to the SACEP Governing Council.

- ✓ Compile good practices for the reduction of air pollution in South Asia.

At the 12th Governing Council of SACEP which was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 1-3 November 2010, the Ministers of Environment encouraged and re-endorsed the activities of Malé Declaration.

Further to this the Second Meeting of the Task Force on Future Development of Malé Declaration on Control and Prevention of Air Pollution and its Likely Transboundary Effects for South Asia was held on 29-30 November 2010, in Colombo, Sri Lanka in collaboration with SACEP. The meeting was attended by the Task Force members from the participating countries of Malé Declaration (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka), as well as the Resource Persons from various institutes involved in this programme. (SACEP, SEI, SDPI, UNEP, UNEP.RRC.AP).

The following items were discussed in detail;

- a) Review of the document on Sustainable Financial Mechanism for Malé Declaration
- b) Detailed Outline and Progress on the Feasibility Report on Strengthening the Framework on Air Pollution Reduction in South Asia
- c) The Feasibility Study on the Establishment of Regional Centres

Further the Malé Secretariat presented the Work Plan of the Malé Declaration for 2011, and it was endorsed by the Task Force to be submitted to the IG12 for its review and approval.

Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation

The 30th Annual Symposium on Sea Turtle Biology and Conservation convened by the International Sea Turtle Society was held from 27 – 29 April 2010 in Goa, India. SACEP was a co-partner in organizing the Symposium in collaboration with the International Sea Turtle Society and the Indian institute of Science in Bangalore.

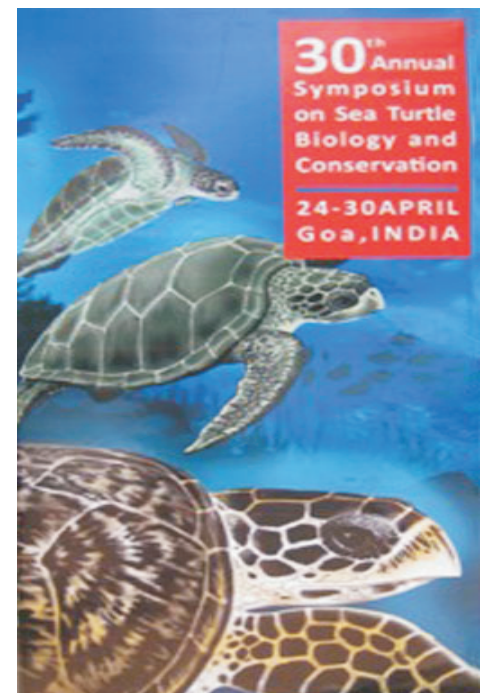
This important gathering brought together around 700 participants from 70 countries around the world for promoting the exchange of information that advances the global knowledge of sea turtle conservation.

A South Asia Mini Symposium, was held on 26th April 2010 where representatives of member states, NGO and Academia sectors came together to discuss the present situation and how to come up with a united regional response to sea turtle conservation in the sub region. In this regard the role that can be played by SACEP/SASP as an intergovernmental partner was also discussed.

An important event that took place at this mini symposium was the signing of the Indian Ocean and South East Asia (IOSEA) Marine Turtle MoU by the Government of Maldives, which made all five member states of the South Asian Seas Programme (SASP), parties to

this multilateral agreement established under the auspicious of Bonn Convention on Migratory Species.

SACEP/SASP plans to play more active role in turtle conservation activities in the region in the future and is looking at the possibilities of conducting a sub-regional meeting to enhance the knowledge on how to conserve this highly threatened migratory species.



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Clean Fuels and Vehicles

Understanding the strong linkages between emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gases and its connection to Global warming and climate change,

Commending the South Asian countries' efforts to successfully phase out leaded gasoline and the significant steps taken by individual countries to improve fuel quality and vehicle standards,

Considering that the introduction of cleaner fuels along with policies and programmes for more efficient vehicles would minimize the air pollution in the region,

Recognizing that air pollution takes a high toll on the health, environment and economies of South Asian countries, and that the transport sector is one of the sources responsible for rapidly increasing emissions,

Mindful that political and technological solutions exist and have proven their effectiveness in many places around the world and that it is necessary to provide financial support and transfer of technology to the developing countries like South Asia's

DECIDE:

1. Promote low Sulphur fuels within Countries of the South Asia region:
 - ✓ Work towards an ultimate goal for the region to be 10ppm Sulphur in fuel, with the intermediary goal of 50ppm Sulphur;
 - ✓ Develop a road map, with a timeframe, on the necessary steps to achieve these goals, including refinery upgrades (where appropriate), and changes in regulations governing fuel quality, emission standards and vehicle fuel economy etc;
 - ✓ Develop an innovative and strategic financial mechanism, and incremental funding through bilateral / multi-lateral aid;
 - ✓ Each country to develop clean development mechanism and to promote public-private partnership in order to promote cleaner fuels and vehicles;

- ✓ Ensure that all policies, programmes and taxes are harmonised to eliminate negative signals that promote dirtier fuel and vehicles;
 - ✓ SACEP countries to eventually harmonise fuel and vehicle standards across the region;
2. Promote clean vehicles within Countries of the South Asia region:
 - ✓ Develop a policy, or update an existing policy, on the importation of second hand vehicles;
 - ✓ Ensure that the vehicle fleet within the country meets ever-tightening standards with regards to age and / or emissions, fuel efficiency etc;
 - ✓ Establish an inspection programme linked to emission standards of in-country vehicles, as well as ensuring that imported vehicles meet certain requirements (based on age and / or technology, such as catalytic converters etc);
 3. Promote clean transport systems within Countries of the South Asia region:
 - ✓ Develop a holistic transport policy that promotes public and non-motorised transport;
 - ✓ Establish a platform for coordinating the different government departments and agencies that are involved in transport or in issues that impact transport;
 - ✓ Ensure that all transport and road related projects include funds and space to provide facilities and infrastructure for non-motorised, people-friendly transport (sidewalks, protected bike lanes, bicycle rickshaw lanes etc), as recommended by UNEP's Share the Road programme;
 - ✓ Initiate awareness raising for public support of clean transport initiatives;
 4. SACEP to create platforms for technical assistance and capacity building between countries, through technical meetings and case studies, in which countries can share best practices and advances in research and development, thus contributing to regional advancement as well as development and adoption of new fuel and vehicle technologies.
 5. SACEP to facilitate promotion and enhance transfer of technology among member countries and from developed countries as well.

Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST)

With the rapid urbanization and economic development in the Asian region, urban transportation has already become one of the prominent environmental issues that are contributing to both local and global environmental concerns. While bringing economic benefits, transport activity causes many negative environmental impacts which include greenhouse gas emissions, local air pollution, water pollution, negative impacts on bio-diversity due to pollution and habitat losses, etc. The existing information on Asian cities and various research outputs re-endorses the fact that issues in the transport sector need special attention in order to realise the environmental sustainability of cities.

The Asian Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) initiative is a joint initiative of UNCRD and the Ministry of the Environment Japan



which aims to build a common understanding across Asia on the essential elements of EST and the need for an integrated approach at local and national level to deal with the multi-sectoral

environment and transport issues.

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Under this initiative, the 1st Regional EST forum, held in Aichi, Japan in 2005 resulted in the Aichi Statement. This statement provided a basis for the participating countries to regularly report upon progress in reaching the objectives. In 2007 SACEP signed a MoU with UNCRD to promote Environmentally Sustainable Transport in the South Asian Region. At the 4th Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) Forum held from 24 - 26 February 2009 in Seoul, Korea, SACEP member states adopted the Seoul Statement on EST which highlighted the need for regional efforts towards win-win solutions that capture co-benefit consideration in addressing sustainable transport and climate changes.

The 5th Regional EST forum with the new theme “A new Decade in the Sustainable Transport” was held in August 2010 in Bangkok, Thailand where SACEP and its all member countries participated.

With the objective of demonstrating the renewed interest and commitment of Asian countries towards realizing a promising decade (2010-2020) of sustainable actions and measures for achieving safe, secure, affordable, efficient, and people and environmentally friendly transport in rapidly urbanizing Asia, the participating countries including the SACEP member countries discussed and agreed on a goodwill declaration — “Bangkok Declaration for 2020 – Sustainable Transport Goals for 2010-2020”

As a way forward to this initiative SACEP & UNCRD agreed to organize a Regional Training Workshop for South Asia as the first phase and this will be followed by National Training programmes in SACEP member countries.

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Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV)



One of the objectives of the PCFV is to assist developing countries in developing action plans to complete the global elimination of leaded gasoline and start to phase down sulphur in diesel and gasoline fuels, concurrent with adopting cleaner vehicle requirements.

It is evident that many of the major cities of South Asian countries are facing the problem of vehicular air pollution. Vehicles, both gasoline and diesel, emit significant quantities of nitrogen oxides, sulphur oxides, particles, carbon monoxide, and hydrocarbons. The number of vehicles in the cities of South Asia has seen a rapid increase in the last ten years. In Delhi alone, the vehicular population has increased around tenfold in 20 years and accounts for more than 60 per cent of the particulate pollution. Especially two-wheelers and diesel driven heavy trucks are a significant source of urban air pollution. These pollutants can be reduced by using lower-sulphur and lead-free fuels and by introducing the new vehicle technologies and emission control devices that require such fuels.

SACEP became a partner of the PCFV in 2008 with the view of assisting its member countries to build their capacity in the areas concerned. SACEP participated at the 7th Global Partnership Meeting of PCFV held from 28 - 30 April 2009 in Szentendre, Hungary which was fully funded by UNEP. As a result of this forum SACEP secured funds from UNEP to organize a Capacity Building Regional Workshop for Senior Officials of South Asia. A MoU was signed between SACEP and UNEP-PCFV to conduct a two day workshop in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 22 - 23 March 2010.

This was an ideal opportunity to discuss and develop a future activity plan with regard to PCFV in the region. At the end of the workshop, there were a number of recommendations made by the country representatives for SACEP to implement.

These recommendations were considered and incorporated to the work programme 2010 – 2011 which was also adopted as a Ministerial Resolution at the 12GC-SACEP.

International Coastal Clean-up Day

In the International Environment Calendar for each year, Saturday of 3rd week of September marks the International Coastal Clean-up Day, where events are organized to make the public aware of the growing problem of debris accumulated in coastal areas. Litter such as plastic bags, soda cans and broken glass are slow to degrade. Studies have shown that marine debris threatens over 265 different species of marine and coastal wildlife through entanglement, smothering and interference with digestive systems. It is a problem that not only damages our marine and coastal ecosystems, but also affects the coastal tourism and public health.

In 1986, the Ocean Conservancy, an NGO ran its first Coastal Clean-up event in Texas, USA and in later years became the co-ordinating agency for the International Coastal Clean-up, helping to spread the concept to nations around the world. Year 2010, celebrates the 25th year of the International Coastal Clean-up Day.



World Oceans Day - 8 June

The United Nations General Assembly has declared from 2009, that 8 June would be designated as the “World Oceans Day” (resolution 63/111, paragraph 171). The theme of the inaugural observance of the World Oceans Day by the United Nations is “Our Oceans, Our Responsibility”.

UN requested SACEP as the Secretariat of UNEP’s Regional Seas Programme for the South Asian Seas Region to organise events to bring awareness of importance of the ocean. The oceans are essential to food security and the health and survival of all life, power our climate and are a critical part of the biosphere.

As a first attempt SACEP took the message of “A Clean Beach – A Tourist Haven” for sustainable tourism. SACEP in collaboration with Sri Lanka Tourist Board organised a Mini Workshop for their officials to convey the message on the importance to protect and conserve marine environment and in future will extend to our South Asian Seas member countries such as Bangladesh, India, Maldives and Pakistan. .

At this Workshop SACEP presented to the august gathering the efforts taken by Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) Denmark, with their flagship programme on Blue Flag to certify beaches.

This was an effort to bring tourism Industry and environment together for a common cause.

The International Coastal Clean-up engages people to remove trash and debris from the world’s beaches and waterways, to identify the sources of debris and to change the behaviours that cause pollution.

Since 2008, SACEP has been organizing many activities to commemorate the Coastal Clean-up Day. In 2009, SACEP and Indian Coast Guard jointly organized the event in Chennai, India.

SACEP in collaboration with US Embassy in Colombo and Ministry of Environment, Government of Sri Lanka organized the beach clean-up programme for year 2010 on Saturday the 25th of September at a selected beach stretch in Negombo, Sri Lanka. On 24th September 2010, an awareness programme was organized for the participating school children on the importance of maintaining a clean beach.

More than 500 school children and people from hotel industry contributed towards this activity.

International Day of Biodiversity

SACEP jointly with the Ministry of Environment, Sri Lanka and the University of Wayamba, Sri Lanka organized an awareness seminar in various issues of Biodiversity on 21st May 2010 at the Wayamba University. A mango festival was also organized to demonstrate the importance of conserving biodiversity towards society’s well being.



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