

SOUTH ASIA CO-OPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

S A C E P

REPORT OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL MEETING

GC-1 27TH - 29TH JANUARY, 1983

COLOMBO - SRI LANKA

SOUTH ASIA CO-OPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
(S A C E P)
REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE GOVERNING
COUNCIL - GC-1

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Report of the First Meeting of
the Governing Council of the
South Asia Co-operative Environment
Programme (SACEP).

27, 28 and 29 January 1983

BMICH, Colombo, Sri Lanka

SOUTH ASIA CO-OPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
FIRST MEETING OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL (GC - 1)

27th to 29th January, 1983
Colombo, Sri Lanka.

REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

The First Meeting of the Governing Council of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on the 27th to 29th January, 1983.

The meeting was immediately preceded by a preparatory meeting viz. of the Workshop to discuss Activities and Future Plans and to select projects for implementation which met in Colombo, Sri Lanka from the 21st to 25th January, 1983 and discussed in detail, at the officials level the matters to be considered by the Governing Council.

2. ATTENDANCE

The Governing Council (GC-1) was attended by Representatives from the following member countries, viz. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Representatives from the following United Nations agencies and bodies also participated : Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), ESCAP/Regional Centre for Technology Transfer (RCTT), United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), and World Health Organization.

A list of participants is at Appendix I.

3. INAUGURATION

The Honourable Lalith Athulathmudali, M.P., Chairman of the Governing Council, requesting Honourable R Premadasa, Prime Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, to inaugurate the Session noted the inspiration provided by and abiding interest showed by the Honourable Prime Minister in matters connected with SACEP. He also referred to grave environmental problems facing the developing countries. He emphasised that although development was in-escapable for developing countries, development should not mean annihilation of the environment. He referred to the inordinately high consumption of scarce resources like petroleum and water in developed countries and expressed the hope that SACEP's efforts would help the member countries towards balanced development without sacrificing the environment. He acknowledged the great assistance SACEP had received from the United Nations Development and Environment Programmes. A copy of the Hon. Lalith Athulathmudali's address is at Appendix 11.

The Honourable R Premadasa, M.P., Prime Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka in his inaugural address, recalled with pleasure that he had inaugurated the meeting establishing SACEP in the very same venue in 1981. The presence of delegates in these meetings indicated the interest of the Governments and people of South Asian Region in the protection and management of the environment, which we live in. This also reflected the recognition of the need to work together in co-operation to meet the challenge of environmental management in our part of the world. He referred to the need, in the context of the dense population and poverty of South Asian countries, for "finely balanced" development to make the most possible use of limited resources. Our objective should be sustainable development and he would like to see SACEP addressing itself and leading the way to the possibilities of modifying the dominant patterns of development and lifestyles in our countries. He announced that, as a further measure, of Sri Lanka's contribution to SACEP, the Government of Sri Lanka will be gifting a building site to SACEP for the establishment of its Head Office.

He referred to the Declaration, by the United Nations General Assembly, of the year 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, a proposal for which was sponsored by the Government of Sri Lanka at the 35th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

He commended to SACEP the inclusion in its programmes of strategies for the successful launching of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, throughout our Region in 1987. He hoped that a coherent frame work of recommendations would emerge from the efforts of SACEP to integrate environmental concerns with development policies and programmes. The full text of his address is at Appendix III.

Dr Leslie Herath, Director of SACEP in his address, thanked the Honourable Prime Minister for his continuing support to SACEP, culminating with the announcement of the building site for the SACEP Headquarters. He expressed the hope that, in a similar manner, other member Governments would come forward with contributions for the building and other amenities required for the Headquarters Office. He briefly reviewed the progress of SACEP, since the initial meeting in Bangalore in 1980 followed by the meeting in Colombo in 1981 at which, through the Colombo Declaration, SACEP was formally launched. By January 1982, the necessary ratification had been received and SACEP became a legal entity. In the period of one year following, with generous assistance from UNDP and UNEP, several important programmes and projects have been identified. These have been looked at critically by a Workshop immediately preceding the meeting of the Governing Council. The recommendations of the Workshop were before the Governing Council for consideration. He particularly paid tribute to UNEP and UNDP for generous assistance, which had enabled SACEP to become operational expressed confidence that such assistance would continue. A copy of his address is at Appendix IV.

Mr Peter S Thacher, Dy. Executive Director of UNEP, brought to the meeting warm greeting from Dr Mostafa Tolba, Executive Director of UNEP in Nairobi. He reviewed with gratification that UNEP had been associated with every one the steps that have brought SACEP to its present stage and expressed his satisfaction that SACEP was launching on important programmes at a time when the Governing Council of UNEP has been calling for a strengthening of their regional presence. In this connection, he recalled the work and efforts of the former Regional Director of UNEP, Mr Suriyakumaran. He assured SACEP not only on behalf of UNEP, but also on behalf of others of the United Nations System of their continued interest and support and wished the meeting all success. A copy of his statement is at Appendix V.

Mr Z S Chowdhury, Chairman of the SACEP Consultative Committee proposed a vote of thanks. He thanked the Government and people of Sri Lanka for the host facilities provided and Prime Minister, in particular, for his interest and support. He also thanked the Minister for attending the meeting. In addition, he thanked UNDP and UNEP and expressed his personal thanks to Mr Y Y Kim, Resident Representative of UNDP in Colombo and Mr Thatcher, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP in Nairobi and paid a tribute to Mr Suriyakumaran, former Regional Director of UNEP for his role in establishing SACEP. A copy of his statement is at Appendix VI.

4. CHAIRMAN, VICE CHAIRMAN AND RAPPORTEUR

In accordance with the provisions of Article 4(c) of the Articles of Association of SACEP, Honourable Abdul Ghafar Lakanwal, Minister of Agriculture and Land Reforms, Government of Afghanistan, Kabul took over the Chairmanship from the Honourable Lalith Athulathudali.

Honourable Obaidullah Khan, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Government of Bangladesh and Honourable Mohamed Zahir Minister of Education, Government of Maldives were elected as Vice-Chairmen of the Meeting and Mr W D Ailapperuma, General Manager, Central Environmental Authority, Colombo, Sri Lanka as Rapporteur. The Chairman nominated the Honourable Obaidullah Khan Vice Chairman to scrutinize the Credentials of the delegations.

5. AGENDA

The Governing Council (GC-1) discussed and amended the Agenda. A copy of the Agenda as adopted is at Appendix VII.

6. STATEMENT OF HEADS OF DELEGATIONS

The Governing Council (GC-1) heard with interest the statements of Heads of delegations. Copies of their statements are at Appendix VIII to XIV.

7. OTHER STATEMENTS

The representatives of UN ESCAP made a statement emphasising the need for close co-operation between his organisation and SACEP and outlined the measures taken to achieve this. He promised full co-operation of ESCAP in SACEP projects and invited reciprocal SACEP participation in ESCAP projects. A copy of his statement is at Appendix XV.

8. STATEMENT OF DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

At the Chairman's request Mr Maurice F. Strong, the first Executive Director of UNEP addressed the Governing Council (GC-1).

Mr Strong recalled that the building up of sub-regional organisations had been envisaged in Stockholm and congratulated SACEP for the progress made. He emphasized that the quality of environment was not merely a product of development, but constituted a resource of development. He wished SACEP all success and promised his whole-hearted assistance in whatever manner was needed.

Mr Suriyakumaran, till recently, Director Regional Office and Regional Representative in Asia and the Pacific of UNEP, recalled the pioneering role Mr Strong had played in the establishment of UNEP. He also congratulated SACEP on the progress made and said that the happy compromise arrived at in the selection of projects was a true example of sub-regional co-operation.

9. CONSIDERATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKSHOP

Opening the discussion on this item the Sri Lanka delegates drew attention to the critical state of SACEP's finances to the fact that in the absence of funds not only was the implementations of programmes impeded but SACEP Secretariat was facing serious financial difficulties and pointed out that the situation was bound to deteriorate further as the activities expanded. There was general agreement that the matter needed urgent attention and it was decided that a resolution calling for the establishment of a Trust Fund may be drafted by a Committee of Members. The text of the resolution as adopted by the Governing Council (GC-1) is at Appendix XVI.

10. MODALITIES OF FOCAL POINTS

The Governing Council (GC-1) considered the determination of the modalities of Focal Points to be of fundamental importance. In this context, the meeting noted that the existence of agreement on them would enhance the operation of the Programme. Accordingly, the Council directed the Secretariat to initiate the consideration of the modalities, so that the agreed draft could be presented for adoption

to the next meeting of the Governing Council in 1984 in the manner prescribed in the Articles of Association.

11. PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

The Governing Council (GC-1) endorsed the recommendations of the Workshop in respect of projects and programmes. An extract from the report of the Workshop on this matter is at Appendix XVII.

12. OTHER POTENTIAL PROJECTS

The Governing Council (GC-1) noted that the High Level Meeting in 1981 had already identified fourteen subject areas for priority treatment and accordingly projects in these areas may be taken up as and when funds are available, subject to the approval by the respective governments.

13. The Governing Council (GC-1) also strongly endorsed the acknowledgements made by the Workshop to the help received by SACEP from UNDP, UNEP and the Government of Sri Lanka and wished to record its appreciation to these bodies for their generous and timely help.

14. BUDGETARY MATTERS

The Governing Council (GC-1) considered the staffing and financial requirements of SACEP Secretariat and felt that the resources available so far are not adequate to enable the Secretariat to function smoothly. The meeting accordingly adopted a resolution urging member countries to become up to date in payment of dues; to consider enhancing the level of their contributions and to create a Trust Fund. The copy of the resolution as adopted is at Appendix XVI.

15. REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY FOCAL POINTS

After the High Level Meeting in 1981 had allocated subject areas to different member countries, the countries have designated focal points and liaison officers and had, in several cases, started implementing projects. Delegations described these projects and

said that the result of their experiences were available to other member countries having similar problems. Statements were also made of proposals for future activities and offers made to member countries to participate in them.

16. OTHER MATTERS

The Governing Council (GC-1) noted the great help SACEP had already received from the UN system, in particular from UNDP and UNEP and adopted a resolution placing on record their great appreciation and expressing the hope that SACEP will continue to obtain such assistance in future. A copy of the resolution as adopted is at Appendix XVIII.

17. DECLARATION OF A YEAR OF TREES FOR SOUTH ASIA

The Governing Council (GC-1) recalled that in his address to the Governing Council, the Hon. Gamini Dissanayake, Minister of Lands & Land Development & Mahaweli Development, Government of Sri Lanka had stressed the importance of a massive effort for planting of trees on all available land decided to adopt a declaration to declare the Year 1988 as a year of Trees for South Asia. The text of the Hon. Gamini Dissanayake's address is at Appendix XIX and of the declaration at Appendix XX.

18. GOVERNING COUNCIL (II)

The Governing Council (GC-1) considered the time and venue of the next Meeting of the Governing Council. It was decided that the Secretariat would send to the Governments of Afghanistan and Bangladesh details of the facilities required within the next three months and these Governments would be invited to confirm if they wanted to host the next meeting to be held in their capitals after which a decision will be taken.

19. SECRETARIAT FOR SACEP

The meeting placed on record its deep appreciation to the Hon. Prime Minister of Sri Lanka for the gift of the valuable piece of land for the SACEP Headquarters Building and for meeting all the costs of Governing Council for the second year, and expressed the hope that other countries will come forward with offers of help for the construction of the building.

20. VOTE OF THANKS

Honourable Festus Perera, M.P. and Minister of Fisheries, Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka proposed a Vote of Thanks. Dr Leslie Herath, Director, SACEP, also thanked all concerned for all the co-operation and assistance he had received.

The Chairman of the Governing Council wished to place on record the deep appreciation of the GC-1 to the small Secretariat of SACEP which had accomplished so much in such a short period despite the various constraints.

21. CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

The meeting considered and adopted this report on 29th January, 1983.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

SACEP MEMBERSAFGHANISTAN

- Hon. Abdul Ghafar Lakanwal - Minister of Agriculture and Land Reform
- Mr M T Zamani - Director-General of Science and Technology,
State Planning Committee, KABUL
- Mr A R Raouf - President of Agriculture and Irrigation
State Planning Committee, KABUL

BANGLADESH

- Hon. Obaidullah Khan - Minister of Agriculture and Forestry
Director, Ministry of Trade Industry
and Forests
- H.E. A.H.F.K. Sadique - High Commissioner for the People's
Republic of Bangladesh
- Mr A M Sharafuddin - Additional Secretary in Charge Science
and Technology Division,
Government of Bangladesh, DHAKA

BHUTAN

- Mr Chenkyab Dorji - Director - Forestry and Forest
Ministry of Trade, Industry and Forests
Thimphu, BHUTAN
- Mr Khandu Dorjee - Section Officer, Research and Development,
Department of Power, Royal Government of
Bhutan, Thimphu, BHUTAN

INDIA

- H.E. Shri S.J.S Chhatwal - High Commissioner for India
- Mr M K Bhadra Kumar - First Secretary
High Commission of India
Colombo 1
- Miss Sudha Shrotria - Under Secretary
Department of Environment
Government of India,
NEW DELHI

MALDIVES

- Hon. Mohamed Zahir Hussain - Minister of Education
- Dr Abdul Samad Abdullah - Director, National Health Services,
Government of Maldives, MALE
- Mr Ahmed Abdullah - Acting High Commissioner
High Commission of Maldives, Colombo 4

PAKISTAN

- H.E. Bakhtiar Ali - Ambassador of the Islamic Republic
of Pakistan
- Mr Rab Nawaz Khan - Second Secretary
Embassy of the Islamic Republic
of Pakistan

SRI LANKA

- Hon. Lalith Athulathmudali - Minister of Trade and Shipping
- Hon. Gamini Disenayake - Minister of Lands and Land Development
and Mahaweli Development
- Hon. Festus Perera - Minister of Fisheries
- Hon. P.C. Imbulana - Deputy Minister of Local Government,
Housing and Construction
- Mr Ivan Samarawickrema - Secretary, Ministry of Mahaweli Development
- Mr K H J Wijeyadasa - Chairman, Central Environmental Authority
and Additional Secretary, Ministry of
Local Government, Housing and Construction
- Mr Harsha Wickremesinghe - Additional Secretary
Ministry of Trade and Shipping
- Mr D Nilaweera - Additional Secretary
Ministry of Agricultural Development
and Research
- Mr C G Wickremesinghe - Additional Secretary
Ministry of Industries and Scientific Affairs
- Dr Hiran Jayawardene - Chairman, National Aquatic Resources Agency
Ministry of Fisheries
- Mr D G B de Silva - Director
Non-Aligned Data Bank
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr W D Ailapperuma - General Manager
Central Environmental Authority
- Mr G B A Fernando - Director, Energy Planning
Ministry of Power and Energy

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|--------------------|--|
| Mr O C Jayawardene | - Director, Forestry and Environment
Ministry of Lands and Land Development |
| Mr David Soysa | - Director, Merchant Shipping
Ministry of Trade and Shipping |
| Dr M Rodrigo | - Assistant Director
Environmental Health
Ministry of Health |

O T H E R S

UNITED NATIONS BODIES

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Mr Peter Thacher | - Deputy Executive Director
United Nations Environment Programme
Nairobi |
| Mr Dhira Phantumvanit | - Regional Adviser
United Nations Environment Programme
Regional Office for the Asia & the Pacific
Bangkok, THAILAND |
| Mr Donatus de Silva | - Information Service
UNEP, Nairobi, KENYA |
| Mr Y Y Kim | - Resident Representative
UNDP in the Republics of Sri Lanka and
Maldives, Colombo 7 |
| Miss Deloraine Brohier | - Senior Programme Officer
United Nations Development Programme
Colombo 7 |
| Mr K F Jalal | - Head, Environmental Co-ordination Unit
ESCAP, Bangkok |
| Mr A H Vishwanath Sarma | - Environment Officer, Environment
Co-ordinating Unit UN/ESCAP |
| Mr C V S Ratnam | - Adviser on Science and Technology Policy
Regional Centre for Technology Transfer
Bangalore-560052, INDIA |

SPECIALISED AGENCIES

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| Mr Percy Lao | - WHO Sanitary Engineer
World Health Organization, Colombo 3 |
|--------------|---|

GUESTS

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Mr Maurice F Strong | - Former Executive Director of UNEP
Chairman, North South Energy
Round Table, Geneva |
| Mr David Munro | - I U C N, Geneva |
| Mr C Suriyakumaran | - Professor, London School of Economics
and Political Science (LSE)
Former Director, Regional Office - UNEP
Bangkok
19A, Alfred Place, COLOMBO 3 |

CONSULTANTS

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Mr Brij Kishore | - Director, Department of Environment
Government of India, New Delhi, INDIA |
| Dr N L Ramanathan | - Director, Department of Environment
Government of India, New Delhi, INDIA |
| Mr E Pitchai | - Professor and Director
Centre for Environmental Studies
Anna University, INDIA |
| Mr M S Wijeratne | - Director, Ceylon Institute of Scientific
and Industrial Research,
Colombo. |

APPENDIX II

SOUTH ASIA CO-OPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

WELCOME ADDRESS BY HON. LALITH ATHULATHMUDALI, MINISTER OF TRADE AND SHIPPING

It is a great pleasure and an honour for me as Chairman, to welcome you here today, at the First Meeting of the Governing Council, South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme. I am grateful to our Prime Minister, the Hon. R. Premadasa, for the inspiration and guidance given in the formulation of this Programme. The Hon. Prime Minister was instrumental in the inauguration of the High Level Meeting, held in February 1981, which initiated this Programme.

To the delegates who have gathered here today, I extend a very warm welcome on behalf of the Governing Council and of Sri Lanka. It is a matter to be happy about - and to be proud of - that the Nations of South Asia, the majority of whom are caught up in the travails of the development process, have realised a danger for too long overlooked by the developed countries - that is, the subtle long term danger of environmental pollution. Today, many of the foremost industrial cities of the world appear to be almost smothered in environmental problems and they present a timely warning to our own development programmes. Development is a pressing need, especially for us in South Asia with our teeming populations and low income levels. But we must pause to consider the concomitants of development - and to avoid its pitfalls. There is a common saying in Sinhala, that to fall into a pit at night is excusable but to fall into one in day time is unforgivable.

The need for a breathable atmosphere has been felt since the world came into existence. Ever since the earth solidified out of its original cosmic gases and diffused materials dust has been the element in its atmosphere. Very early in history, too, Man was tantalized by the possibilities of venturing out of his natural environment - into space and beneath the oceans. Wherever he went,

he had to find a breathable atmosphere. The ancient Romans knew the fundamentals of Man's requirements when they built public baths, aqueducts and drainage systems. With the fall of the Roman Empire, the Dark Ages ushered in not only the end of learning and culture but of hygienic living. It is ironic that with the dawn of the Industrial Revolution hygiene reached its nadir and Man's life span shrank to 35 years.

Since then, Man has directed every effort to "Develop" - to grow economically, to improve his quality of life. It is an effort that has succeeded - and today, in many parts of the world, Man lives better and controls more of nature than he ever did. But it is a fact - a regrettable and ironic fact - that for many years development has been permitted to be hostile to environment, to occur at the cost of it, to undermine and waste it. Man has often developed whilst paving the road to his own annihilation. A few figures remind us that natural resources are not unlimited. A Stanford University survey shows that an average citizen in U.S.A. uses 21 thousand gallons of petrol and 26 million gallons of water in a life time of 70 years. It is also estimated that industrial progress in the last hundred years has added over 15% to the carbon dioxide content of our air, Scientists say that further significant increases may warm up the globe so that the Arctic and Antarctic Ice Caps would melt and flood our major cities. A contrary argument is that the increasing smog pollution would form a shield against the sun's rays and start a return to the Ice Age. All this is controversial. What is not controversial is the fact that we are already beginning to suffer from the ignorance of long term effects of the exploitation of nature. There is little point in theoretical arguments regarding the habitability of the earth in the year 2000 AD. The point is that something should - and can - be done now. It is easy enough to forget the underlying dangers and yield to present convenience. At a Seminar on "Man and the Future" held at the

University of Kansas, the question of atmospheric pollution by the motor car was raised and an unanimous condemnation made of the invention as a threat to civilization. At the end of the Conference, all the participants got into their cars and drove away in this condemned invention.

It is heartening, then, that we in South Asia have awakened to a threat long overlooked in more developed countries. We have not merely awakened, but have put into effect a concerted programme. It is a matter of pride that countries with relatively low income patterns, yet rich in history and culture, have got together - in a pragmatic manner - to work jointly to preserve the environment without which we cannot survive. Such concerted action is necessary partly because the problem is not a national one and therefore cannot be solved within the boundaries of a single country. It is also necessary to act together because the majority of the Programme's Members are as yet undeveloped in many ways - in technology, in expertise, and in financial capability. So, interchange and co-operation among them is essential. The idea of self help which underlies the programme is indeed a laudable one - indicating the increasing stature of developing nations in matters of global dimensions.

At a time when International Committees and Conferences produce a plethora of reports, guidelines and suggestions which never materialise into concrete proposals, it is encouraging to see that the Governing Council of SACEP has already defined a series of practical projects. The pragmatic nature of these projects is clearly apparent when we regard the areas they cover - areas of basic importance to the people of South Asia such as fuelwood conservation, recycling of wastes and organised environmental education.

We are very grateful to the UNEP for providing the funds

to initiate action in selected regions and to conduct a Workshop for the endorsement of work plans in these focal points. The UNDP has allocated an initial sum of Dollars half million for projects in the 1982/1984 period.

Sri Lanka's commitment to the Programme is an indication of my country's desire to establish an increasing degree of co-operation among the nations of South Asia. It indicates our willingness to work actively with our immediate neighbours.

On the Members of SACEP has evolved a serious responsibility - and a rare opportunity - to channel and direct the benefits of development whilst avoiding one of its greatest inherent dangers, that of damaging and wasting that very same environment it seeks to utilise for the growth of Man. I have no doubt that this Programme will achieve all it seeks to do. Whilst assuring my country's continued support and co-operation, I wish this Meeting every success.

January 27th, 1983.

ADDRESS BY THE HON. R. PREMADASA, M.P.
PRIME MINISTER OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST
REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA

I am very pleased to have been provided the opportunity to inaugurate this First Governing Council Meeting of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme. SACEP was established at a Ministers Meeting at this very same venue in February, 1981. At the inaugural meeting in 1981, I had the honour of welcoming the distinguished delegates. I indicated that their presence reflected the interest that the Governments and people of the South Asian Region have shown in the protection and management of the environment in which we live. It also reflected the recognition of the need to work together in co-operation to meet the challenge of environmental management in our part of the world. Distinguished delegates, your presence here, today, is a reiteration and an endorsement of this effort at co-operative action. It is undoubtedly a validation of its success so far.

We are meeting at a time when the resilience of the international economic system is being sorely tested. We, in this part of the world are facing grave problems like the declining demand for our exports of raw materials and manufactured goods. I do not need to chronicle the problems that beset our economies. They are known, all too well, to you who are at the helm of affairs in your own countries. What is more important and evident is the increasing need for co-operation and mutual dependence among nations-especially neighbours like us.

In this context, the launching of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme becomes an initiative of indisputable significance. What we achieved in 1981 was something unique. In our South Asian Region, where there was no organisation or machinery for co-operation the countries themselves agreed to establish such machinery. We ourselves forged a basis for co-operation. Not only did we initiate and launch this co-operative action, but we also agreed to contribute funds and expenses towards the success of that effort. The importance of SACEP lies not only

in its being the first step towards co-operative action in South Asia. It lies also in the spirit and commitment with which South Asian countries, including some categorised as least developed countries, accepted their financial responsibilities. They unhesitatingly came forward to provide financial contributions to ensure such co-operation.

May I add here, that SACEP should therefore associate itself, in whatever way possible, to strengthen the economic co-operation that is now being contemplated by some of these countries.

As the Minister in charge of the co-ordination of environmental activities in Sri Lanka, I am extremely happy that environment served as the instrument through which this pioneering co-operative organisation was established. It is very apt, that the cause of the environment, the basis of our sustenance and of our future survival, formed the means of South Asia's first attempt at co-operation. 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. The Government of Sri Lanka is grateful to the member countries for allowing us the opportunity to make a humble contribution towards this effort. We had the opportunity to provide host facilities to the Secretariat of the SACEP, as well as for the inaugural Ministerial Meeting, and for this first Governing Council Meeting. I am happy to announce today, that the Government of Sri Lanka will be gifting a building site to SACEP for the establishment of its Head Office. I hope this office will stand as a symbol of successful South Asian Co-operative action.

It is still not fully realised that development and the process of development rests mainly upon the underpinnings of the environment. The environmental underpinnings of our economic systems have to be made secure. We have to provide evidence of being able to sustain present and future development. Otherwise economic dislocations and outright breakdowns would become the dominant feature in the years ahead of us. This

is the conclusion arrived at in studies like the World Environment Report of the United Nations Environmental Programme. Such reports record that the roads to destruction run directly from a failure to satisfactorily resolve national policies on environment and development.

The world will soon have over six billion inhabitants of whom at least 1½ billion will be in the South Asian Region. A vast majority of these people will swell the ranks of the poor. They will intensify pressures on already severely degraded environments and depressed Natural Resources. As a result we will be evidencing worsening trends as regards deforestation and topsoil loss. We will see increasing desert encroachment, pollution, water scarcities, over-grazing, over-fishing and spread of toxic wastes. In such a world, the only kind of development that can make any sense is development capable of meeting at a minimum, basic human needs, and which is sustainable. It is this objective - the objective of environmental security and sustainable development, that I would like to commend to you, at this First Governing Council Meeting.

The overwhelming reality in our South Asian Region, of course, is the dense population. They live often in extreme poverty, on a very limited land area. This has necessitated "finely balanced" development to make the most possible use of limited resources. In our attempts to achieve this objective of sustainable development, we may have to abandon the imported development models. These models, we inherited from our various colonial masters. In our region, there is now an urgent need to search for alternative development models. We have to base these new models on principles such as self-reliance, popular participation and utilisation of local resources. I would like to see SACEP, in the coming few years, addressing itself and leading the way, to the possibilities of modifying the dominant patterns of development and life styles in our countries.

I expect, that this important meeting will stimulate and catalyse concrete action at the national and regional levels to make environmentally prudent and socio-economically acceptable patterns of development, a reality in our part of the world.

Distinguished delegates, you have before you, as the main task during the next two and half days, the determination of the future path of this young organisation. You would deliberate on the possibilities of their adoption at National and Regional levels, and the mechanisms for their implementation. These programmes, while responding to urgent human needs in the Region, need to be at the same time, environmentally prudent. Your talks therefore, is not by any means an easy one. I have no doubt, that the excellent background papers, prepared for you at the officials workshop, will highlight the key issues and help to channel your deliberations. However, I would like to add a few remarks on a subject, which I think would be of special relevance in your consideration of the strategies for the coming years. This is the subject of much importance to our Region and of course very much close to my heart - the declaration of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless.

The distinguished delegates present here today, are undoubtedly aware of the declaration of the year 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, by the United Nations General Assembly. This proposal, as you know, was sponsored by the Government of Sri Lanka and I had the privilege of introducing it at the 35th Session of the UN General Assembly. I need not elaborate here, the intrinsic relationship between shelter and environment or between human settlements and the environment. I have no hesitation in commending to this distinguished gathering, the consideration and inclusion of strategies for the successful launching of the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, throughout our Region in 1987.

Before I conclude, I would like to make a few comments on the main objectives, which you, Distinguished Delegates, may wish to achieve through your deliberations. Your foremost objective of course, would be to present a coherent framework of recommendations that would assist member governments in their efforts to integrate environmental concerns with development goals and policies. In addition, this would

assist in the identification of the extent to which such integration may require changes in our values, attitudes, lifestyles and development patterns. The stimulation of a continuing effort in member countries to adopt environmentally sound projects, programmes and policies, would be another important objective. An equally important objective which appears to me to be worth considering is an exchange of ideas and experiences among ourselves on formulating long-term perspectives and strategies for sustainable development. This is especially so in our South Asian Region, where there is a considerable and articulate body of organised thought on the need to evolve autonomous lifestyles and patterns of development.

I spoke earlier of the co-operative spirit and the political commitment which launched the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme in 1981. The environmental and developmental problems that we face are daunting. Our problems of widespread poverty and unemployment, coupled with large and growing populations require fundamental and innovative thinking. Yet SACEP is fortunate in the wealth and variety of experience and the long cultural traditions in our countries. Our experience in making possible, sustained improvements in the quality of life in the people are extraordinary. Our histories abound in examples of ingenious uses of natural resources for food production, appropriate application of traditional technologies and the like. It is in this context that I believe, that the conclusions and recommendations of this distinguished gathering will reinforce the same pioneering spirit, that initially launched SACEP as the first co-operative effort in the South Asian Region.

In concluding let me express my congratulations to the Director of SACEP and his small band of officials who spared no efforts to establish this programme on a firm basis. Let me also congratulate the members of the Consultative Committee, who ungrudgingly guided the organisation through all its faltering early steps. The National focal

points without whose active co-operation, this whole effort would not have been a reality, deserve congratulations from all of us. This historical first Governing Council Meeting of SACEP, which I am honoured to inaugurate today, is the result of the tireless efforts of all of them.

THANK YOU.

APPENDIX IV

ADDRESS BY DR. LESLIE HERATH, DIRECTOR,
SOUTH ASIA CO-OPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

I deem it a great honour and a privilege to address this august Assembly on the occasion of the First Governing Council Meeting of SACEP - South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme.

Hon. Prime Minister, this must be a gratifying moment to you to see the vision that you had of the countries of South Asia working in a co-operative manner, for the common good becoming a reality. None will refute the fact that you pioneered this union and to-date it has leaned very heavily on your broad shoulders not only for sustenance in financial terms but for moral and conceptual guidance which SACEP has got at every instance from you. The relevance and the timeliness of the establishment of SACEP is seen by the fact that the South Asian Countries being encouraged by this union is now actively engaged in exploring the possibility of co-operation into other areas such as in the field of economic activities. I would like to take this opportunity also to thank you, Hon. Lalith Athulathmudali, the First Chairman of the Governing Council for your valuable role in the first year of SACEP's operation.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I wish to very briefly outline the historical development of this organisation to those who may not be aware of its genesis. As we know, due to a variety of historical reasons the South Asian Countries have never in the past grouped themselves together for a co-operative effort in any field while most other countries in the world are in one group or other working for a common goal. It was in this climate that the Honourable Prime Minister of Sri Lanka conceived the possibility of these countries working together in a patently non-controversial area viz. the concern of the environment, so that the latent potential of co-operative action could be harnessed fully by these countries. The UNEP who are very sensitive to voluntary reaction of this nature reacted immediately and a meeting of a High Level Officials was

organised in Bangalore, India in 1980 under the patronage of the United Nations where nine of the ten countries of South Asia were represented. After a period of intensive preparatory work, the Ministers of the countries in South Asia met in February 1981, in Colombo. This meeting adopted a declaration now commonly known as the Colombo Declaration and approved the Articles of Association which initiated the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme.

The Meeting of Ministers approved my candidature proposed by the Government of Sri Lanka to be its first Director. They also accepted the offer made by the Government of Sri Lanka to extend host facilities for the Secretariat in Colombo.

This event took place in late February 1981 and as such funds were not voted for this activity in the General Budget for that year, which fact made it necessary to resort to supplementary estimate procedure to obtain the initial funds to commence activities in this new Organisation. Most of us who are gathered here know the unavoidable delays in getting supplementary estimates passed and this was compounded by the fact that there was an embargo on supplementary estimates by the Ministry of Finance during 1981. We appealed to the Water Resources Board for a loan in order to keep the momentum gained by this Institution. The Water Resources Board graciously granted an interest free loan of One Million Rupees. This loan was paid back in full when we got our voted funds. We are most grateful to the Water Resources Board for that generous gesture, which helped SACEP to make an early start.

The UNEP was the Agency that crystalised the conceptual frame of SACEP as enunciated by the Honourable Prime Minister. Both the Regional Office of UNEP and its Headquarters in Nairobi left no stone unturned to ensure that SACEP should see the light of day as early as possible. We are indeed most encouraged Mr. Thacher that you found the time and thought it fit to be present in person for this inaugural meeting and the subsequent deliberations of the Governing

Council.

I am pleased to inform this House that UNDP has given us favoured treatment possibly recognising the difficulties in initiating a new Institution and has also allocated a sum of money to be used to implement projects and programmes that would be approved by this Governing Council. In fact, one of the Principal Missions that formulated projects for SACEP was funded by UNDP. In this context, I must extend my personal gratitude to Mr. Kim and his staff for the very understanding manner that they treated us in the past one year. Mr. Kim was a great source of inspiration to us and I take this opportunity to thank you personally Mr. Kim.

I shall certainly be failing in my duty if I do not express my gratitude to the Sri Lanka Focal Point for all assistance given to SACEP since its inception. Mr. Wijayadasa, Addl. Secretary/L.G.H. & C. and Chairman, Central Environmental Authority, with his able Deputy Mr. Ailapperuma, were a great source of strength and has in every way assisted in organising this Conference.

After the minimum number of countries had ratified the Articles of Association, SACEP became a legal entity on the 7th of January 1982. Therefore, legally we are one year old. SACEP, as you would appreciate, was unable to take any meaningful steps before the legal status was established. To-date, the following countries have ratified the Articles of Association ; Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Nepal will take part in the meeting as an observer. Iran in fact was to be represented by the Deputy Prime Minister. Yesterday we were informed that he was unable to be present at this inaugural meeting. SACEP is working with nine of the ten countries of South Asia. After SACEP was legally constituted early last year, we have been able to mount three Missions funded by UNDP, UNEP and SACEP. Ten different projects have been formulated by these Missions and these have been discussed at length

at the Workshop which concluded on the 25th of this month. I do not wish to go into detail on these projects but the report of the Workshop would be submitted to the Governing Council for their deliberations during its Sessions in the coming two days.

The Ministerial Meeting in 1981 emphasised the need for co-operative activity in the field of environment. The 'environment' as defined by them was the management and the rational utilisation of the resource base in order that the development benefits would accrue to the target groups in a sustainable manner over time. In this context, they emphasised the need for technical co-operation among developing countries and went as far as to say that before we look outside for what we want, we should learn to look inside for what we have. It has been our experience during the very short time that for most of the activities that we have contemplated during the past year, the expertise and the experience were available in the Region and the member countries were willing to share these resources. In fact, all the projects so far formulated by SACEP have been accomplished due to the fact that member Governments were willing to release their senior staff for assignment with SACEP. They have only accepted very nominal honourarium to underscore the spirit of our co-operation.

A rather significant programme that SACEP has been able to initiate was a Regional Seas Programme for the South Asian Seas. There are today ten Regional Seas Programmes in the world covering almost all the tropical seas. On a decision made by SACEP Consultative Committee, a resolution was passed at the 10th Governing Council of UNEP to initiate a Regional Seas Programme for South Asian Seas. A Consultant will report to the 11th Governing Council of UNEP about the modalities for initiating such a programme.

Another project that we are now implementing in the member countries is of special relevance to us. This is the control of mosquitoes by a non-toxic method. We are all aware of the environmental

hazards encountered in the current strategy of mosquito control discounting the risks of mosquitoes becoming resistant to the chemicals that are being used now. The method that we are now field testing was researched by the University of Southampton and the Government of U.K. is funding the Pilot Projects to test its efficacy in our condition. If this project is successful, we have now got an indication that funds may be made available from the EEC to expand this Programme.

The fact that nine of the poorest countries, five of them being classified as least developed, have considered it fit to co-operate on their own volition in this rather vital area of development, is indeed a reason for gratification. They have themselves volunteered to contribute modest sums of money in order to initiate this activity. Due to this fact the donor agencies viewed this cohesion very sympathetically, as they feel that this co-operative effort is a felt need by these countries in South Asia. I am glad to say that a number of donor agencies have indicated that they would support projects and programmes initiated by SACEP. It is my firm belief that if suitable projects could be identified and formulated in a professional manner reflecting the felt needs of these countries, funds could be found to implement them. In this Mr. Chairman, I have outlined the rosy part of the picture. The knotty and the difficult ones are many as is common to all Institutions, more so to those that are in the early stages of establishment. I do not wish to elucidate them in this forum but shall take them up at the working session of the Governing Council. I thank you the Hon. Prime Minister on behalf of SACEP for your gesture of showing confidence in SACEP by allocating a piece of land, so that SACEP could have a permanent and a proud Secretariat. I fervently hope that this gesture of the Hon. Prime Minister is infectious and that a sympathetic donor would volunteer to pay for the cost of erecting such a Secretariat.

Mr. Chairman, I must express my satisfaction even though it is coming from me about our activities during the last one year with all the constraints experienced. Having started from scratch we have now

cemented a co-operative effort where seven countries have ratified the Articles of Association and nine out of ten countries in the Region are participating in our activities. The UN System has consented to lend support to this Organisation. Three Missions that have been mounted by SACEP have prepared ten separate projects. The UNEP has kindly consented to initiate a Regional Seas Programme for South Asia. A toxic method of mosquito control is being implemented now. Some of the UN agencies are seriously considering adopting SACEP to implement Regional Programmes in South Asia. All in all, people are beginning to accept us as a useful appendage. All this was possible mainly due to the support and co-operation that I received from the Consultative Committee and the member countries. Let me conclude this address with the earnest hope that the co-operative effort that we have initiated via SACEP will bring the countries in South Asia together to work in harmony by sharing their resources for their mutual benefit.

THANK YOU.

STATEMENT BY PETER S. THACHER, DEPUTY EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR, UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

I bring you the warmest greetings from Dr. Mostafa Tolba who wishes very much that his duties at our Headquarters in Nairobi had allowed him the pleasure of addressing you directly. I am honoured on his behalf to address this inaugural meeting of the Governing Council of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme.

The Colombo Declaration of 1981, the ratification of the Articles of Association, the generous hospitality of the Government of Sri Lanka for your Secretariat and this meeting, and the contributions of governments which have already begun to flow, all these developments serve to confirm the political foresight and responsibility with which you and your governments are addressing the commitment in the Colombo Declaration; "to work out the harmonious balance between the process of development and the resources of nature". This meeting is a testimony of your commitment to the path of sustainable development for your people today, and for generations to come.

As such, it is a strong reminder at the outset of the second decade after the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, that the issues that were then the focus of attention, and were recently addressed by governments at the Session of Special Character of UNEP's Governing Council last May in Nairobi, still command attention at the highest levels of government and lead to practical steps of international co-operation in dealing constructively with environmental problems and opportunities. This Council is therefore an example which we in the United Nations Environment Programme welcome not only because of its significance for the future well-being of people in this region, but as an example to encourage similar co-operative action in other regions of the world. The fact that

disagreements of a contemporary nature can be laid aside while you jointly tackle the common problems that you share in order to protect your common future is a matter of utmost importance, not only for the future quality of your citizens lives, but for their peace and security as well.

We in UNEP, especially our Regional Office colocated with ESCAP in Bangkok, have been intimately involved in steps which led to this meeting, and I would like to pay tribute for this to our former Director in this region, Mr. C. Suriyakumaran. I have in mind the expert meeting in Bangalore in 1980, the High-Level Meeting here in February 1981 and the Meeting of Ministers immediately thereafter which initiated SACEP.

More recently we have taken part in missions preceding this meeting as well as in consultations with some of your governments on a Regional Seas Programme resulted by our Governing Council last May.

In all these steps, UNEP's role has been a catalyst and coordinator to poll together the experience and resources of the entire UN System to serve your governments.

Our principle partners in this joint venture have been UNDP and the many Specialised Agencies who cooperate in the UN Development Programme. I want to second our real appreciation for their strong interest and generosity in setting aside considerable funds to support activities under your programme. I also want to signal to you the strong role that other regional organisations can play if you request them principally, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Asian Development Bank, and their many associated institutions. Additionally there are in this region other sub-regional groups which have come together to cope with many of the same problems on your agenda; the ASEAN

Environment Programme (ASEP) involving Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand; the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) with more than 20 widespread countries and islands; the Kuwait Action Plan in which one of your members is playing a leading role; and others such as those states working in the Lower Mekong Basin, and your neighbours to the West who recently met in the Seychelles to draw up a regional environment plan for East African Coastal States.

All of this collective action comes at a time when UNEP's Governing Council has called for a strengthening of our regional presence, within, as always, existing available resources.

Our ability to assist you depends on you; on your ability to use, to direct the many international organisations who exist to serve governments. More importantly it depends on what you do at the national level for it is your priorities which determine where real resources go, and don't go. The decisions you take here this week on regional programme and budgetary matters and your follow-up at the national level will therefore be of the utmost importance in mobilizing additional support for what are, and must be, matters of domestic concern to each of your sovereign states. The high level and breadth of experience, and responsibility, represented in the Council today is truly an encouraging sign for the future.

When it is appropriate to your agenda, my colleagues will welcome an opportunity to respond to questions with regard to programme matters, but I want at the outset of your considerations to record UNEP's continuing desire to play a catalytic role together with other agencies and programmes of the UN System to support these programmes which you collectively approve in the days ahead.

Let me close by confirming also that we enjoy, and hope to continue to enjoy, the closest relationship with your Secretariat.

I hope you will give it the support it needs if it is to serve your collective interests effectively. On this I speak, I am sure not only on behalf of UNEP, but also on behalf of others of the UN System who are prepared to continue within their own capabilities to provide practical support for your endeavours.

We and our colleagues in the United Nations System treasure our association with your collective effort. We are grateful for the opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of the UN System; in the words of the UN Charter, "to be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends".

I thank you for the honour of addressing you at the outset of this historic inaugural session of the Council.

VOTE OF THANKS BY MR. Z.S. CHOWDHURY, CHAIRMAN,
SACEP CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

As the Chairman of the Consultative Committee, I consider it a duty of great honour and privilege to thank you, Mr. Prime Minister and those who have done so much to bring SACEP to its present stage. These words of thanks are more than a basic decorum. SACEP consists of some of the resource deficient countries of the world and still we have achieved quite something in one year. I may be permitted the liberty, Mr. Prime Minister, to put on record all the encouragement and support you have given to SACEP. You not only gave the first idea of Regional Environmental Co-operation but pursued this idea with untiring energy to see SACEP established. Your presence here today to address the Governing Council Meeting shows your feelings for this organisation and is a source of great encouragement to us.

Mr. Prime Minister, under your leadership the Government of Sri Lanka has also played a key role in getting the organisation off the ground. I would particularly like to acknowledge the contribution of the Ministry of Local Government and Housing, the Environmental Authority and the Water Resources Board. This last named organisation gave us a generous loan without which SACEP could not have started its operation in 1981.

We are also very grateful to you, Mr. Athulathmudali both in your capacity as Chairman of the Governing Council and as the Minister of the Government for your valuable support and active interest which made SACEP viable. You have played a very crucial role in enabling the SACEP to move towards a purposeful direction. We know how busy you are and we are very grateful for all that you have done for us.

It is also an important part of my duty today to record

on behalf of the Consultative Committee, deep appreciation of the presence here of the distinguished representatives of member countries particularly the presence of four Ministers, which is not only a source of great inspiration to us but also symbolises the priority we all accord to the value of this regional environmental programme. We are very thankful to all the distinguished Ministers, for coming to the meeting despite the demand of their other important duties.

I have acknowledged the role of host country and the member governments but there is another important acknowledgement I must make and this is the valuable contribution and support given to SACEP by UNDP and UNEP. These two UN agencies played a very vital role and helping SACEP to mount its projects which the Governing Council will consider. I would like to thank the Resident Representative of UNDP in Colombo, Mr. Y.Y. Kim for his keen interest shown in SACEP activities and his support and advice. The UNEP has likewise helped us so much and I would like to thank their Representative Mr. P. Thacher. Mr. Thacher does not live in Colombo and his presence here today is evidence of the importance he and UNEP attach to SACEP. It was the Regional Office for Asia and Pacific of UNEP headed at that time by a distinguished Sri Lankan whom I am very happy to see among us today which was the prime mover of this regional cooperation. They all deserve our profound thanks.

Finally, I must acknowledge the services rendered by the Director of the organisation, Dr. Leslie Herath. Because this is a fledgeling organisation consisting of countries not very affluent, Dr. Herath's task has been much difficult but he did a marvellous job in running the Secretariat with a skeleton staff and a difficult budget. He specially deserves our thanks for the hard work put in to make all the preparations for the Governing Council Meeting.

Mr. Prime Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen, I do not wish to prolong further and would like to conclude by wishing SACEP all

the best in this current meeting. Your collective wisdom applied in a true spirit of cooperation will we hope, launch a set of realistic programmes which can benefit the people of this region and thus make our efforts meaningful.

THANK YOU.

SOUTH ASIA CO-OPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME
GOVERNING COUNCIL - FIRST MEETING

27th to 29th January 1983
Colombo, Sri Lanka.

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Election of Office Bearers
3. Adoption of Agenda and Organisation of work
4. Statements by Heads of Delegations
5. Consideration of the recommendation of the Workshop to discuss Activities and Future Plans and Select Projects for Implementation
6. Budgetary Matters
7. Review of activities undertaken by Focal Points
8. Other matters brought up with the approval of the Chairman
9. Consideration and Adoption of the Report

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND LAND
REFORMS, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN

It is a great privilege for me to chair this important meeting of the Governing Council of SACEP and to be amongst such august gathering. I thank you all for giving me this honour. I also thank the Government of Sri Lanka for the kind hospitality and courtesies extended to us. Efforts made by Mr. Herath and other SACEP staff to arrange this meeting and the workshop in an excellent manner are commendable and I thank them all. I would like to extend my particular thanks to His Excellency the Minister of Trade and Shipping of the Government of Sri Lanka of the valuable and successful efforts made by him as a first Chairman of the SACEP Governing Council.

Your Excellencies, the Stockholm Conference held in 1972 created an awareness and understanding of the human environment and its problem by the international community. As a result of this Conference, many countries have adopted environmental legislations and measures for protection of the environment. In this context the idea of setting SACEP, a co-operative programme for the ten countries of this region is praiseworthy and benefits have started accruing. Firstly, this body has started acting as one focal point for co-ordination with UNEP, ESCAP and other UN organisations. Secondly, it is trying to mobilise funds to provide to the SACEP member countries, consultancy service for environmental management, an example of which is deputing preparatory assistance mission to Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and other member countries in September 1982. This mission has made very useful suggestions which I hope will receive careful consideration.

The Stockholm declaration provided the basic code and efforts were required to be made by the countries to manage environment. However, the Governing Council of UNEP which met in March 1982 at Nairobi noted that the progress on implementation of the environmental

programme has not been commensurate with the importance of the problem. Deforestation, soil and water degradation and desertification, were reaching alarming proportions and endangering the living conditions in many parts of the world. We have, therefore, to think of two things : (a) what should be done in the SACEP countries and (b) in what manner should we coordinate our activities with other regions and organisations.

Distinguished delegates, over the last 10 years, the environmental aspects which need attention appear to have been well conceived. We now require to take concrete and constructive steps to make some progress. The five points which have been identified for urgent action are : environmental legislation, renewable and reusable sources of energy, energy and environment and environmental education and training, environmental assessment and Regional Seas. These are all important subjects for which focal points have already been selected. The progress on furthering the cause of these points has however been rather limited. For instance, Afghanistan is the focal point for Social Forestry and we would have urged this assembly to request SACEP to activate this subject area at a very early date, in order to avoid the deterioration of the environment due to these causes.

Distinguished delegates, let us decide in this meeting how to initiate action. On the question of environmental legislation for which India is the focal point, and has already adopted legislation, India can depute some consultants to the SACEP member countries, who have not drafted and adopted such legislation. India is also the focal point for NEW and Renewable Sources of Energy and Environmental Education and Training. With the abundance of experienced technical manpower in India, it will be in a position to supply expertise to the SACEP member countries in these subjects. In addition, a few representatives from SACEP member countries, could be sent to India for training. Similar action can be taken for energy environment.

For Social Forestry, Afghanistan does not have enough expertise to send to member countries, but a seminar or workshop will help to identify the problems and devise means to obtain the assistance required.

Distinguished delegates, Environmental Education needs to be in two parts. One is mass education of the population for awareness of the environmental problems and hazards. The other needs to be at higher level for professionals and sub-professionals for which special courses at the regional institutions and universities need to be organised. I would welcome your suggestions on this point.

Distinguished delegates, let me say something about environmental problems of Afghanistan now. The fragility of the country's environment is most vividly portrayed by its narrow soil base, low in organic matter, high rate of evaporation often creating salinity etc. The rugged topography and the harsh arid climate virtually excludes any significant possibility of extending the area under cultivation beyond 8 million hectares out of 65.22 million hectares of total area of the country. It is, therefore, essential to follow a land use policy which must optimise the return from the shallow soil base and ensure its conservation and maintenance.

A great deal of soil erosion is caused by natural agents like water, wind and sun. Inland Siestan Basin extending over 18,000 square kilometers, situated in the southwest of Afghanistan, bordering Iran, which was once the granary is now desert. Archaeological studies have revealed that the area had settlements for centuries and the large old canal systems and ruins of parts and villages are indicative of the dense population and high degree of cultivation and prosperity. It has happened as a result of the Helmand river changing course, making it impossible to feed the canals and silting large areas under its bed. Such tendencies of the rivers, if not checked,

can cause desertification over large areas. Measures to combat desertification are thus urgently required. These facts make an urgent implementation of a social forestry programme a vital need.

Desertification is taking place over large areas with lack of afforestation plans. The methods of felling the trees is inappropriate and cause damage to the growing trees. Facilities available to develop new and renewable sources of energy are not available and we are trying to seek assistance for development of a centre for this purpose. Similar could be the conditions with some other member countries. A joint effort could be organised by the SACEP member countries.

The problem of soil erosion, deforestation, desertification and lack of environmental legislation are common to most of us. We can have a coordinated and cooperative effort to take remedial measures. The Government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan is dedicated to the welfare of the majority of the population which is mostly affected by these causes. With about 85% of our population deriving its livelihood from agriculture, animal husbandry and connected trades, we have to pay attention to the improvement of living conditions of this large section of the population affected by environmental matters.

Distinguished delegates, without taking more of your time, I would now request all of you to consider the recommendations made by the Workshop and other environmental matters of mutual interest.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

STATEMENT BY THE HON. MINISTER, OBAIDULLAH KHAN,
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY OF THE
GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH

It is with great pleasure that I join my distinguished colleagues in congratulating His Excellency Honourable Abdul Ghafar Lakhanwal distinguished Minister of Agriculture and Land Reforms of Afghanistan on his taking over as the Chairman of the Governing Council. My delegation is confident that under his able Chairmanship, the Governing Council Meeting will accomplish something both tangible and beneficial in the field of environmental co-operation. May I also thank the distinguished delegates to the meeting for electing me and Honourable Mr. Mohamed Zahir Hussain of Maldives as Vice-Chairmen.

I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the host country Sri Lanka for the cordial hospitality and excellent arrangements made for us. Before I make my statement, may I reaffirm our conviction regarding an alternative model for development incorporating self-sufficiency and popular participation which His Excellency the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka referred to in his inaugural address. Cooperative endeavour in environmental development has therefore to be looked at in the larger perspective of collective self reliance of South Asian countries.

The South Asian sub-region bounded by the towering Himalayas at one end and the rumbling Indian Ocean at the other has both ecological similarities and diversities. In the context of recent collective efforts to build a regional fabric of cooperation in South Asia, the need for attention to environment management in this region acquires a significant dimension. SACEP was established from that basic awareness and we feel proud to have actively participated in the process. I would like to reiterate our commitment to its various programmes which seek to address the environment problems

of the sub-region.

In Bangladesh, as in many developing countries such problems are generally connected with under development and poverty. The policy of our government is to formulate and implement development projects, keeping in view the ecological balance and the need to improve the quality of life of the common people. Agricultural sector, specially self sufficiency in food, receives our highest priority. Since the majority of our people live in rural areas and depend for their livelihood on agriculture, we are emphasising rural development as the core of our development and planning strategy. The recent decentralisation of administration and grant of more decision making power to Thanas, which are our basic administrative units, form a key feature of our current policy thrust. Bangladesh lives in 68000 villages and I believe the same picture obtains in other countries of this region.

I therefore strongly feel that the environment projects which we are going to formulate in future and put into effect through our regional cooperation should have special focus on the countryside. I may mention here that we in Bangladesh are trying to develop renewable and reusable sources of energy such as social forestry biomass etc. Much has been achieved in India, Nepal and Sri Lanka in this area and mutual exchange of information will be of benefit to the SACEP countries.

One other specific area which in our view deserves attention of SACEP is conservation of coastal ecosystem, mangroves, corals and island ecosystems. In fact, Bangladesh was made focal points for these subjects in Bangalore meeting in 1980 which was later confirmed in the ministerial meeting of SACEP in 1981. I would like to say that in our view the 14 subject areas identified in Ministerial Meeting 1981 could form the basis of future actions.

In conclusion, I would emphasise one particular point.

SACEP is a new organisation and its members are developing countries. We have already made a beginning in the environmental cooperation and it is very important that there should be careful and realistic determination of priorities in our programming. We should, I feel take in hand projects and programmes which are within our knowledge and technology base which are based on a broad regional consensus and justifiable in terms of our limited resources. Such an approach, I may modestly submit, will be very helpful if SACEP is to deliver on the goals for which we the regional countries brought it into being. Members of SACEP may individually lack in resources, but it is our firm belief that if we develop a cooperative spirit and pragmatically pool our resources, we can achieve much more than through our individual efforts.

THANK YOU.

STATEMENT BY MR. C. DORJI, THE LEADER OF BHUTANESE
DELEGATION

On behalf of the Bhutanese delegation, First of all I would like to offer our warmest congratulations to H.E. Abdul Ghafar Lakhnawal, Minister of Agriculture and Land Reforms, on his unanimous election as Chairman of this Meeting. We are confident that under your able leadership this meeting will produce fruitful results.

I would also like to thank the Sri Lankan Government for the generous hospitality extended to us.

It is with a sense of great happiness that we attend this meeting of the Governing Council of SACEP for the first time after becoming a member in January 1981. We attach great importance to the emergence of SACEP as the first ever co-operative endeavour on the part of the countries of South Asia. We fully support all the programmes and activities of SACEP.

It is now generally recognised that the preservation of our environment is an integral part of development. Any developmental projects and programmes that we may formulate must include effective measures for the conservation and rational management of the environment, in order to improve the quality of life and safeguard the interests of future generations.

Many national programmes for the care and management of the environment have been undertaken. The population explosion resulting in increased pressure on land, deforestation and continuous depletion of natural resources, soil erosion and air, water and other pollutions have adversely affected our physical environment, and thereby threatened the lives of 1/5th of the world's population living in our region. To combat these challenges, our national

efforts alone have not proved adequate in the past.

The problems of environment faced by the countries in our region are not confined to national boundaries. In fact, in no other sphere is the interdependence of the regional countries more evident than in that of environment. There are many potential areas in which fruitful co-operative environment programmes can be undertaken to supplement our national efforts. Our collective efforts will be an important factor for enhancing regional capability to face environmental challenges. In this, SACEP can play an important role.

Mr. Chairman, for us in Bhutan, fortunately, the problems of environment do not pose any serious threat at present. Abundance of natural resources, small population, and other favourable factors have helped to preserve our environment. However, we are fully aware that negligence and defective planning in the process of modernizing our country may create serious environmental problems in the future. We seek to achieve harmonization of environment with development through careful planning and judicious use of nature's bounty. And in this endeavour, we seek the co-operation of other countries of our region.

It is gratifying to note that the Workshop, to discuss activities and future plans and to select pilot projects for implementation has concluded with meaningful results. I congratulate the Chairman, Director SACEP and the delegates of the Workshop for the commendable job they have done.

The Kingdom of Bhutan, shall make special efforts and extend all possible co-operation to the countries of our region in the process of realising the objectives and aspirations set forth by SACEP, for the Welfare of SACEP member countries.

In the end I would like to state that success of our programmes shall mainly depend on proper design of the strategy. I strongly feel that such a strategy should be made which involves maximum people's participation as we are making these programmes for the people and it should be implemented by the people under the technical guidance from the Executing Agencies/Government.

I once again wish to thank the Government of Sri Lanka and the United Nations Environment Programme and other U.N. Agencies for the excellent arrangements made for the success of this meeting and made our stay in this beautiful country comfortable.

I also wish every success to the First Governing Council Meeting being held in Colombo.

THANK YOU.

STATEMENT OF THE HEAD OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION
HIS EXCELLENCY SHRI S.J.S. CHATWAL, HIGH
COMMISSIONER FOR INDIA IN SRI LANKA

This is the first occasion that the Governing Council of South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) has been convened. We have unanimously chosen Hon. Abdul Ghafar Lakhnawal, Minister of Agriculture and Land Reform, Afghanistan as our Chairman. May I, Mr. Chairman, offer our felicitations and assure you of our fullest co-operation.

It is a happy coincidence that the Government of India established a Department of Environment at about the same time as the countries of the region decided to form SACEP. In spite of preoccupation with initiating environmental programmes nationally, the Government of India has been actively involved, along with the other member countries, in fostering the growth of SACEP. I would like to assure the Governing Council, on behalf of Government of India, that SACEP would continue to receive our co-operation in mounting projects and programmes of importance for the benefit of the peoples of the region.

We have noted with satisfaction the commendable initiatives taken by SACEP in focussing the attention of the countries in the region on the several environmental issues facing them. It is appropriate at this juncture to recall that in the last year SACEP mounted three project identification missions and has already got a package of programmes formulated in areas of common concern to the member countries. Most of these projects are action-oriented and would utilise and enhance the expertise and facilities in the member countries. We understand that the member countries visited by the missions extended full co-operation. This is indeed a happy augury for things to come. The projects formulated have received endorsement

from the officials who met here earlier and several countries including India have expressed their readiness to implement those projects relevant to them. It is clear that the missions sponsored by SACEP have done commendable work.

I avail of this opportunity to emphasise that the efforts of SACEP should be reinforced and supplemented by the national programmes of member countries. I am happy to inform you that the Government of India have earmarked funds in its budget for the implementation of SACEP programmes in the focal point areas allotted to India.

My delegation deeply appreciates the warmth with which the Government of Sri Lanka has welcomed them to participate in the First Governing Council Meeting of SACEP.

THANK YOU.

STATEMENT BY HON. MOHAMED ZAHIR HUSSAIN,
MINISTER OF EDUCATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES

It is a great honour and privilege for me to be able to participate in the First Governing Council Meeting of SACEP. I extend to you warm greetings of the people and Government of the Maldives.

I would also like to express special appreciation to Hon. Lalith Athulathmudali who has with his eloquence and vast experience so skillfully chaired the Governing Council during the last year. I am pleased also to congratulate and wish the new Chairman of the Governing Council in whom we have great confidence.

I take this opportunity also to thank Dr. Leslie Herath, Director of SACEP for his constructive and successful mission in running the organisation so well with a very small staff and administrative and other difficulties.

We note with satisfaction and pleasure that inspite of various financial and other constraints, SACEP has made fast and remarkable strides in its endeavours to establish itself as a regional body capable of achieving its aims and objectives as set forth at its inception. In its short existence, SACEP has already mounted three successful expert missions to various member countries and formulated several projects that are of regional character and of utmost importance to all of us. I am confident that the implementation of these projects will provide us with speedy solutions to some of the many environmental problems faced by us.

As you know, the Republic of Maldives is among the least developed countries of the world with very limited natural resources. The country consists of 1,200 islands, of which only 203 are inhabited, with a population of 160,000, scattered in a relatively vast area of sea in the mighty Indian Ocean. We have always depended on our

sea for our livelihood. Because the poor and sandy soil of the coral islands are not adequately fertile for agricultural purposes. It is of paramount importance to correctly exploit and use the meagre resources of the country. Sufficient measures concerning the environmental protection are also of utmost significance. In this regard, necessary legislative provisions have been made in our constitution in respect of the fisheries regulations, coral and sand mining and deforestation.

His Excellency President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom has initiated in the Maldives a national campaign for growing more trees and has named 1983 as the Year of Plantation. This campaign has already gained tremendous popularity and success.

The various projects selected for implementation by the officials meeting that preceded this Governing Council Meeting would receive our support. However, we would like to see SACEP giving higher priority to the protection of the Fragile Island eco-systems in our countries.

In conclusion, I would like to express my delegation's sincere appreciation for the support given to SACEP by the Government of Sri Lanka. The dedication and untiring efforts of Prime Minister R. Premadasa deserves special acknowledgement.

I wish SACEP all the success in its worthy deliberations.

THANK YOU.

STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY BAKHTIAR ALI,
AMBASSADOR OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

We have had this morning two distinguished personalities of Sri Lanka give us the honour of their well considered and sagacious views on the matters to which this meeting is addressing itself. I wish to register with you and through you convey to them, the deep appreciation and gratitude of my delegation for the guidance they have given us. Sir, SACEP is a body founded in a spirit of co-operation to find ways and means for the amelioration of the peoples of this region. It is in this spirit that we are gathered around this table and my delegation has been instructed by the Government to keep this spirit as the basis of its participation.

First let me say, Sir, that it is a matter of great pleasure for us to see that with the unstinted support of UNEP, and of the member countries and with devotion, dedication and untiring efforts of the Director and his staff, SACEP has become operational and that it has been able to convene the first meeting of its Governing Council at a juncture when general policy directives on its activities in the 1980s were most needed.

Mr. Chairman, my delegation appreciates that it was with high expectations that member countries set out to formulate the objectives of this body for regional co-operation. We may have been moved by the magnitude of our aspirations in hoping that within this short span of two years it would have out grown its initial problems. It appears to me that the fundamental job of this organisation remains to inform other important organisations within the comity of nations of its aims and objectives to lay a ground work of cooperation with them. There are indeed other factors which have prevented this organisation from achieving its objectives in full measure which include, inter alia, the absence of general policy guidelines, the lack of well defined modalities of operations of some of its vital organs in the implementation of its policies, shortage of manpower to

cope with the increasing work load of the Secretariat, etc. It is the hope of my delegation that we will address ourselves to these issues in this Council Meeting.

Selection of priority areas has been an other arduous job. This august Council could address itself to the issue of making the priority areas adequately reflect major environmental issues which are of concern to the countries of SACEP as a whole. The damage being done to the environment by deforestation, desertification, degradation of soil, deterioration in human health and marine life are issues of a far greater concern than is reflected in the importance given to them.

Mr. Chairman, it is now over two years since the Secretariat was assigned the task to attend to basic organisational issues. The Consultative Committee had also met a number of times during this period. The Council should now consider the role and working of the focal points allocated to member countries. It seems to me that the role currently visualised for these focal points could dilute the purposes for which this Co-operative Programme was organised. Similarly, a cursory glance at the recruitment policy of SACEP where experts, consultants and others have been engaged for specific requirements from time to time points up the need to tap the availability of expertise and resources through the length and breadth of the area which this Organisation encompasses.

Mr. Chairman, may I take this opportunity to assure this august body that Pakistan delegation would lend all possible assistance in order that the Council concludes its mandate successfully and meaningfully. In conclusion, Pakistan delegation would like to convey its appreciation to Mr. Leslie Herath, Director and his staff in the SACEP Secretariat for the valuable work done by them in providing us this opportunity, to get us together to exchange views on future of this important regional programme despite limitations and constraints under which they had to work.

I THANK YOU.

STATEMENT MADE BY HON. P.C. IMBULANA, DEPUTY
MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, HOUSING & CONSTRUCTION,
ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF THE SRI LANKA DELEGATION

I am happy that I have been given this opportunity of making a statement on behalf of the Sri Lanka Delegation to the First Governing Council Meeting of SACEP.

The period since our meeting in February 1981 was an important period for Sri Lanka in her efforts to protect and manage the environment. More than at any stage in our history, attention is now being drawn to the importance of considering the environmental aspects of development. The development effort mounted by the Government is almost unprecedented. Such development must naturally bring in its wake serious environmental disturbances, conflicts and disharmony which can lead to the destruction of the environment, if they were not properly handled and sorted out.

The challenge that we face today in Sri Lanka is that of creating a whole new approach to growth, to the process of growth and to the determination of the patterns of growth. Environment can no longer be seen as an issue separate and distinct from growth, which can be dealt with simply by adding another element to the current growth practices. It is through the process of growth that environment is affected positively or negatively.

Sri Lanka, has made a concerted effort during the past few years to evolve new policies and strategies in the protection and management of the environment. This attempt is a commitment on the part of the Government and our political leadership to manage and improve the environment in order to enhance the quality of life of our people. The need for environmental protection and management is duly recognised in our constitution. We also gave priority to the establishment of a much needed legal and institutional framework for environment. The National Environmental Act which included the establishment of the Central Environmental Authority, was passed by

Parliament in 1980. The Central Environmental Authority was established in October 1981 and is now fully operational.

Also during this period the Government of Sri Lanka had the privilege of providing support and assistance to the establishment of SACEP. As you know, we were given the opportunity by the member countries of providing modest host facilities to the SACEP Secretariat, as well as to the First Ministerial Meeting and to this Governing Council Meeting. I am thankful to the member countries for this gesture. I am also happy that the Government of Sri Lanka has provided much assistance in the initial establishment work of the SACEP. The Central Environmental Authority which is the focal point for SACEP was always available to the Director and staff of SACEP for any service or assistance.

We have also attempted to fulfil our responsibilities as the focal point for the subject areas of environment and development, cost benefit analysis on environmental impact assessment within the limits of our capacities. At our request SACEP was kind enough to provide a consultant to visit the member countries and evolve a strategy for future activities under these subject areas. This strategy includes manpower development programme on environmental assessment for the South Asia region as well as a number of demonstration projects all over the region on environmental assessment. I would like to assure you distinguished delegates that Sri Lanka would undertake these tasks with pride and responsibility.

The Government of Sri Lanka has recently decided to make environmental assessment mandatory for all development projects - both in the private and public sectors by 1984. The Government has also decided that the year 1983 would be devoted to the preparation of goals and procedures for environmental assessment as well as for training expertise in these fields. This decision of the Sri Lanka Government, I believe, would strengthen our programmes

and activities in the subject area of environment and development, under the SACEP.

His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka recently appointed a Task Force for the preparation of a National Conservation Strategy based on the guidelines given in the World Conservation Strategy. This is another significant land mark in our efforts to protect and manage the environment. This Task Force has already held several meetings and the preparation of the National Conservation Strategy is well under way. I hope that Sri Lanka will be able to exchange information and our experiences, in this task as well, with the member countries on this important activity.

I wish to conclude by wishing this First Governing Council Meeting all success and by reiterating our assurance of unstinted support to the future programmes of SACEP.

THANK YOU.

STATEMENT BY MR. KAZI F. JALAL, CHIEF,
ENVIRONMENTAL CO-ORDINATING UNIT, UN/ESCAP

On behalf of the Executive Secretary and on my own behalf I would like to express our appreciation to the Governing Council of SACEP for inviting ESCAP to its first session.

I recall with great pleasure and satisfaction a statement which the Honourable Prime Minister of Sri Lanka made in 1981 while delivering his inaugural address at the Ministerial Level Meeting to initiate the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme. He stated "It is now well known that in the development process, the environment - the life support system of the society - can be impaired, as well as enhanced. The methods we choose, the strategies we adopt could constitute either a constraint or the potential for the achievement of the basic goals of development. It is therefore essential that the mutually dependent relationships between development and environment be fully understood in our strategies for development". In line with this basic principle and in accordance with the International Development Strategy for the third United Nations Development decade, ESCAP is seeking to promote economic and social development activities in the region that are environmentally sustainable over the long-run and that protect the ecological balance. Through a modest, multidisciplinary team of experts, ESCAP provides technical assistance and advisory services to its member countries, and in particular to those developing countries which need them most, in their environmentally sound development efforts. In the field of environment, ESCAP's main effort is directed towards promotion of environmental awareness at all levels and strengthening the institutional and legislative frame works for environmental protection. In addition to these supporting measures, ESCAP is also concerned with the two most severe environmental problems of the region - desertification including tropical deforestation and degradation of marine environment and related ecosystems (which includes the corals, mangroves and island ecosystems).

Turning to the question of co-operation between SACEP and

ESCAP, allow me to generally express that such co-operation in our view is not only desirable but also in line with one of ESCAP's main functions, as mandated to it by the Commission, which is to promote regional and sub-regional co-operation. The Executive Secretary of ESCAP has taken a keen personal interest in promoting co-operation in South Asia and in his view such co-operation is one of the most effective ways of achieving economic growth and stability. The new emphasis on such south-south co-operation should be viewed as consistent with an enlarged north-south relationship and not as detracting from it.

Mr. Chairman, at a recent ESCAP meeting of government nominated senior experts on environment concluded last month, the Director of SACEP expressed interest in identifying specific areas for co-operation between ESCAP and SACEP on the formulation and implementation of projects and programmes in the South Asian countries. In response to this and also in line with ESCAP's policy and objective in promoting sub-regional co-operation. I shall have further consultations with the Director of SACEP in identifying specific areas of co-operation, once this Governing Council has approved the programme of work of SACEP. Looking at our own programme of work and available resources, I can see the possible areas of co-operation as follows - (i) marine environment protection (including management of mangroves, corals and island ecosystems); (ii) desertification (including tropical deforestation); (iii) environmental legislation; and (iv) environmental awareness.

Of these four areas, ESCAP's programme of work for 1983 lays a special emphasis on the protection of marine environment and related ecosystems. The distinguished delegates may please note that with 39 maritime states, (out of its total membership of 44), the Commission which is our Governing Council, and of course, of which all the countries represented here are full members decided at its 35th session in Manila held in 1979 that protection of marine

environment and related ecosystems should be one of four priority areas. Since then these subsequent sessions of the Commission in 1980, 1981 and 1982 has reiterated that ESCAP should continue this as one of the priority areas. Accordingly, during 1980-1981, ESCAP implemented a regional project on the protection of marine environment in which 13 countries including four South Asian countries India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka had participated. Now we are launching Phase II of the project.

I am happy to inform this august body that for the protection of marine environment and related ecosystems in Sri Lanka, ESCAP has already initiated a pilot project in close co-operation with an Inter-agency Committee consisting of representatives of four Ministries and Agencies as follows -

1. The Central Environmental Authority
2. Ministry of Fisheries, Coast Conservation Division
3. National Aquatic Resources Agency
4. Ministry of Trade and Shipping

In fact, this Inter-agency Committee will have the primary responsibility for implementation of the project. ESCAP, though a small team of experts lead by Dr. A.H.V. Sharwa - an expert on marine environment and related ecosystems - will provide technical support from our side. ESCAP will also provide partial financial support, particularly to meet the foreign exchange component of the project.

In addition to this field project, during 1983, ESCAP will organise one regional training workshop on the protection of marine environment in December 1983 either in Bangkok, which is the Headquarters of the ESCAP, or at the Institute of Oceanography, Goa, India subject to the availability of host facility. Also a seminar on the mangroves corals and island ecosystems is tentatively being planned in 1983 to be held either in Bangkok or Dhaka, subject again

to the availability of host facility. As I state, these are the activities in the field of marine environment protection which will be implemented during 1983, as decided by our own Commission. ESCAP would be happy to undertake some of these activities with SACEP, as the principal partner.

Having stated this, Mr. Chairman, I would request your indulgence to enable me to express our concern on two matters. The first one is a regionwide, general concern on the effectiveness to promote environmental awareness at all levels a concern which you have already expressed in your statement. A preliminary review and appraisal of the environmental situation in the ESCAP region indicates that the decade following the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment has witnessed significant changes primarily by way of establishment of environmental institutions and legislations. At the regional level, ESCAP since 1972, has adopted four resolutions on environment. You may also be interested to know that exactly ten years ago, as intergovernmental meeting of the then ECAFE adopted as "Asian Plan of Action for Human Environment 1973". Despite all these developments, a cursory examination of the environmental predicament indicates that many of the environmental problems discussed and foreseen a decade ago still persist and in fact some of them have become further aggravated. I would only like to believe that the countries of the region are passing through a gestation period, during which the institutions and legislations already established, are about to implement action programmes. However, there are doubts already expressed in various fora as to whether environment, as a co-partner of development process, is merely being treated as a concept and not as a practice. Considering this and the need for a review of programme of implementation of all the resolutions and "action plan" adopted by the governments, the Commission at its thirty-eighth session in 1982 had decided to convene a ministerial level conference on the environment for Asian sub-region in late 1984 or early 1985. As this will be essentially a conference of ministers of SACEP member countries,

it would be only appropriate for the Secretariats of ESCAP and SACEP to work in closely on the work preparatory to this conference.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, it is of some concern that despite all the support which SACEP has enjoyed so far, it has not been able to flourish as strongly as other sub-regional programmes such as the ASEAN Environment Programme (ASEP) or the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP). With a long list of programme areas and yet longer list of projects, SACEP, in our view has two options : (i) to secure additional financial support from the participating member countries or (ii) to restrict its programme of work to a few selected, manageable areas. In this regard, I recall that the representative of UNDP made a statement at the High Level Meeting to initiate the SACEP in February 1981 here in Colombo. "We consider it important for the participating governments of SACEP to assure the management and financial responsibility for the co-ordinating committee and for the area focal points, so that the co-operative programme would become part of their own development projects and not something imposed from outside".

It is certainly not for me to suggest which path SACEP should choose in implementing its programme of work. What I can assure you is that ESCAP would continue to work closely with SACEP and to provide all possible support to SACEP, irrespective of the option it chooses.

I thank you Mr. Chairman and Excellencies, for your patience.

Resolution

FIRST SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL (SACEP)

Administrative matters relating to staffing and Finance

The Governing Council,

- Having considered the Administrative matters relating to staffing and Finance of SACEP.
- Conscious that the maintenance of an efficient Secretariat is vital for the sustenance and continuation of programmes and project activities of SACEP.
- Noting that the SACEP's financial situation has not improved so as to enable the Secretariat to function smoothly and at a desirable level of efficiency in order to sustain the programme activities.
- Considering that contributions pledged by the member countries would have helped the Secretariat to meet most of the establishment costs.
- Mindful that the proposed structure of the Secretariat for the year 1983 is just adequate for the maintenance of programme activities for the year and that a conscious effort should be made to structure the Secretariat giving due regard to economy and the circumstances of member countries.
- Expresses its appreciation of the contributions so far made by member countries including Sri Lanka, which has provided support for the maintenance of the Secretariat of SACEP.

Resolves,

- 1) That member countries which have pledged country contributions for the years 1981 and 1982 and have so far not paid up these contributions do so at an early date.

.... 2

- 2) That pledges by member countries for the year 1983 be made and contributions made at an early date ; and
- 3) That consideration be given in future to making annual pledges by member countries at the ordinary session of the Governing Council which will normally be held at the beginning of each year.

Calls upon member countries,

- 1) To consider making an enhanced country contribution for the year 1983.
- 2) To consider making a lump-sum contribution in order to build up an adequate reserve of funds for SACEP's (basic organisational and programme activities.)

Resolves,

- 1) That a Trust Fund be established to which the lump-sum contribution from member countries and contributions from other interested donor countries, organisations, financial institutions, international organisations and agencies may be sought for the (above) organisational and programme support costs, (and that this Trust Fund which was earlier envisaged in the thinking of the first Ministerial Meeting in Colombo, in February 1981 to serve as a financial reserve to ensure SACEP's orderly operations.),
- 2) That the Director of SACEP be authorised to pursue with the prospective donor countries and agencies the possibility of raising resources needed for the Trust Fund, and report on the progress made from time to time to the Consultative Committee and to the next session of the Governing Council in 1984.

Adopted at Colombo
on 28.01.1983.

SOUTH ASIA CO-OPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Extract from the report of the Workshop to
Discuss Activities and Future Plans and to
select Projects for Implementation
21 - 26 January, 1989 Colombo, Sri Lanka

9. ITEM 5 - PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

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"One of the criteria governing the selection of projects was that they should be regional in character. In this context, it was explained that, if a project was supported by at least three member countries, it may be given adequate priority for implementation.

The meeting then proceeded to consider individual projects. All the projects were accepted in principle subject to specific approval of participation member countries prior to implementation and the specific comments contained under each item.

10. ITEM 5(a) - INTEGRATED ENERGY SAVING, DOMESTIC
STOVES FUELWOOD SYSTEMS

The following points were made by some delegates during the discussion of this item -

- (a) The expertise already available in this field should be compiled and circulated by SACEP Secretariat to all member countries urgently.
- (b) The cost effectiveness of the project should be established indisputably so that it becomes acceptable on a wider scale.
- (c) Additional projects on alternative sources of energy like solar, wind power, biogas, etc. should be developed.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND INFORMATION (ITEM 5b)

The meeting felt that, taking into consideration the large areas to be covered, the diverse languages and customs in different countries etc. it would be impractical to get the necessary results by creating one centre in a particular country. A more fruitful approach would be to identify institutions to carry out the programmes in the different countries with necessary co-ordination mechanism established at SACEP Headquarters. As one or two workshops may not be sufficient to educate, inform and motivate all levels of people in all countries, it would be appropriate if national workshops are also arranged. The meeting accordingly decided that the project may be re-written taking these views into consideration.

12. ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION (ITEM 5c)

Accepted

13. ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARING HOUSE SERVICES (ITEM 5d)

Accepted

14. DEMONSTRATION PLANT FOR RICE-HUSK ASH CEMENT IN SRI LANKA
ITEM 5e)

DEMONSTRATION PLANT FOR SURKHI IN NEPAL (ITEM 5f)

DEMONSTRATION PLANT FOR FEED BLOCKS FROM AGRICULTURAL
RESIDUES IN PAKISTAN (ITEM 5g)

Accepted

15. MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
(ITEM 5h)

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF INVESTMENT PROMOTION ZONES AT
KATUNAYAKE AND BIYAGAMA (ITEM 5i)

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED BOMBAY HIGH GAS BASED
FERTILIZER PLANTS IN GUJERAT AND MAHARASHTRA (ITEM 5j)

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF JAVEDAN CEMENT LIMITED,
KARACHCHI (ITEM 5k)

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF SANITATION DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMME IN MALE, MALDIVES (ITEM 5l)

OTHER CANDIDATE PROJECTS SUGGESTED FOR STUDY IN THE
FIELD OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (ITEM 5m)

The meeting agreed on the importance of developing environmental assessment models suitable for use in decision making in the member countries and recommended the pilot projects for endorsement by the Governing Council. The meeting expressed the view that priority should be given to projects having a regional flavour and that the benefit of experience gained from these projects reached everyone. It was explained that the projects for manpower development had been designed for this purpose. Additional pilot projects in the subject of environmental assessment should also be prepared for implementation in the member countries."

SOUTH ASIA CO-OPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

PROGRAMMES SUPPORT BY UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

The Governing Council of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP), at its First Meeting, held in Colombo, January, 27 - 29, 1983.

Noting with great appreciation the help and assistance SACEP had received from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) from its very inception, which, in fact, had enabled it to initiate its programmes.

KEEPING in mind the enlarged programme that it has proposed to implement which will require much larger resources.

REQUESTS the UNITED NATIONS system in particular UNEP and UNDP to continue its funding support to SACEP, on an enhanced scale, so that the vital programmes may be implemented in the member countries of SACEP.

Adopted.

28.01.83

Colombo, Sri Lanka.

ADDRESS BY HON. GAMINI DISSANAYAKE, MINISTER OF
LANDS AND LAND DEVELOPMENT AND MAHAWELI DEVELOPMENT

It is my privilege and honour to be asked to address today's proceedings of this First Governing Council of SACEP. Although you have been amply welcomed at the opening session, I want to take this opportunity, personally and in my capacity as Minister of Lands and Land Development and Mahaweli Development in Sri Lanka, to extend my warmest greetings to you and to wish you the maximum results from your collaborative efforts in these deliberations.

I am certain that at this meeting you will be deliberating on many important issues, of the present and the future, as they must be of deep concern to us in our respective countries, and also together, as members of this South Asian Community. I have no doubt that in the broad spectrum of your deliberations on environmental management, the thread that has run through them is the concept of environmental management as the rational utilization of the resource base in order that development itself would be sustained over time. It is this profound principle of seeking, maintaining and enlarging the resources of development for our people that served as the basis for the programme priorities that you identified at the first meeting of Ministers that set up SACEP in February 1981. I do not need to take up your time by going over that again here. They are, in any case, known to you. Some distinguished delegates gathered here, who are experts in their own right, I am certain, will do justice in the course of your deliberations, in developing the needed sound practical programmes under each of these subject areas that will serve the ideals and purposes for which we gathered in 1981 to establish SACEP.

In my presentation today, I want to focus attention on one particular activity which is fundamental to providing for the basic needs of our people. I refer to our trees and forests. Indeed, trees have a bearing on a number of our economic needs and growth capacities.

This is so precisely because of the wide ranging purposes served by trees and forests to all living beings. They are capital assets always and have contributed from time immemorial to economic and social activities of the community in various ways. An individual tree is a family asset and trees in a local community are a source of food, fuel, fodder, fertilizer and building material. Our great natural and exotic forests play a fundamental role in our agrarian economy by protecting water-sheds, lessening the run-off rate of rivers, ensuring soil fertility and providing the habitat for both wild life and the fast depleting genetic plant resources. Man-made plantations especially rubber often covering hundreds of thousand acres in this part of the world also play the function of forests, and perform a vital role in the eco-system. For reasons well known to you, the forests and trees have been exploited without any consideration to the ill-effects that such exploitation would cause to the environment and to our resource base. All developing countries in South Asia are well aware of the chaos and clamities caused by the rape of our forests, for whatever reasons, be it the greed of the rich or the need of the poor. Developing countries are now allocating considerable sums of money, though too little, for the ressurection, maintenance and judicious expansion of forest cover in keeping with the needs of ecological and economic requirements of the nations concerned.

In this, we have a coincidence of a common interest from the developed countries, from whom therefore it would be possible to expect the strongest financial support. Most temperate climate countries have depleted their forests already and developed countries are extremely keen supporters of global efforts in the maintenance and consolidation of forest cover. There is concern as to maintaining the levels of carbon dioxide and in conserving the ozone layer, in both of which trees play a vital balancing role. This interest of the developed countries is one of these rare symbiotic relationships in which giver and taker are both beneficiaries.

In view of the very high priority allocated to this subject both by the developed and developing world, I wish to place before this Council a proposal. I wish to propose that the Year 1988 be designated THE YEAR OF TREES FOR SOUTH ASIA, so that from now on we can resolve to develop in each of our countries programmes of needed scale and practical value, which could be implemented with assistance from developed countries and international agency sources, in order that this lost capital asset is restored to the required status. I have no doubt that if we resolve to undertake this Programme with determination and professionalism, the world community too may adopt this model for replication elsewhere.

Examples of rehabilitation of forests are many in South and elsewhere. Outside South Asia, perhaps, I may point to a remarkable exercise that China has completed under a family programme of planting 2000 million trees last year. Even allowing for lapses in maintaining them it does constitute a phenomenal achievement. This apart, during the 70's, China completed under state and official auspices, what must have been one of the most spectacular tree and forest planting programmes undertaken. The village and social forestry programmes in some states in India are in a different way a spectacular example of what can be achieved. At the same time, in many places in our region the ravages of mountain slopes, as in Nepal and erosion from the coastal areas, and the denuding of the forests go on. We need in South Asia the launching of a great redemptive programme, as an urgent and vital initiative to save the depleting forest asset and to launch out on rapid reforestation programmes.

The programme for us in SACEP will involve national level thinking and planning. As I mentioned, it is not simply environmental, economic and developmental. It will also give opportunities for an involved sharing of our common knowledge and experience in the environmental, economic and social aspects of forestry. It should involve exchanging research data, seed material and various other aspects of

a successful national, regional and possibly, global project.

I am making this proposal, expecially in view of the fact that a co-operative effort will enhance and accelerate this vital activity. It may also perhaps become an outstanding symbol of our collaborative will and spirit in SACEP. I commend this to you in all earnestness and hope that, after your deliberations and appropriate refinements and formulation, you will consider the declaration of the year 1988 as THE YEAR OF TREES FOR SOUTH ASIA and set out its targets and the incumbent responsibilities for SACEP members.

I thank you very much, and now wish to proceed to the deliberations as in the Agenda today.

DECLARATION

THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE SOUTH ASIA CO-OPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (SACEP) at its FIRST MEETING held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 27 and 28 January 1983.

HAVING heard with great interest the address of the Hon. Gamini Disanayake, Minister of Lands and Land Development and Mahaweli Development, Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, in which he made a fervent appeal for urgent co-operative action to be taken to resurrect, restore and re-establish tree and forest cover in the territories of the countries of South Asia.

CONSIDERING that trees and forests which had been our capital assets and which contributed to regular and timely flow of water and provide resources for economic and social activities of the community, had been subjected to indiscriminate and inconsiderate exploitation.

NOTING that most Member countries have appreciated the extensive and calamitous nature of the damage caused by such exploitation and have allocated considerable resources for the resurrection and restoration of forest cover in their territories through re-afforestation and social forestry programmes.

NOTING further that, happily, in this matter the interests of the developed countries, who do not have sufficient land area for the purpose, appear to coincide with that of the developing countries and accordingly may be expected to give symbiotic support to programmes for tree and forest planting in developing countries.

NOTING in this context the remarkable feat of tree planting in a massive scale in countries such as China, where all marginal lands, borders, boundaries etc., have been planted with appropriate species.

CALLS upon Member Countries, who also have considerable vacant marginal land, boundaries, borders etc., to MOUNT AN INTENSIVE CO-OPERATIVE EFFORT in this matter and as a part of the effort.

RECOMMENDS that the year 1988 be declared the YEAR OF TREES FOR SOUTH ASIA.

DIRECTS the Secretariat of SACEP, as a set of activities to attain the goals and targets of this recommendation, to promote projects and programmes for the sharing of knowledge, experience and development of seed material, the exchange of research data between Member Countries and for this purpose seek and obtain the help and assistance from developed countries as well as from international agencies like the Fypd and Agricultural Organisation, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme.

Adopted in Colombo

28.1.83.